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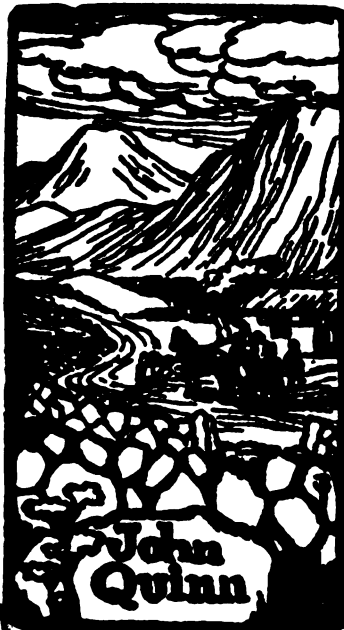
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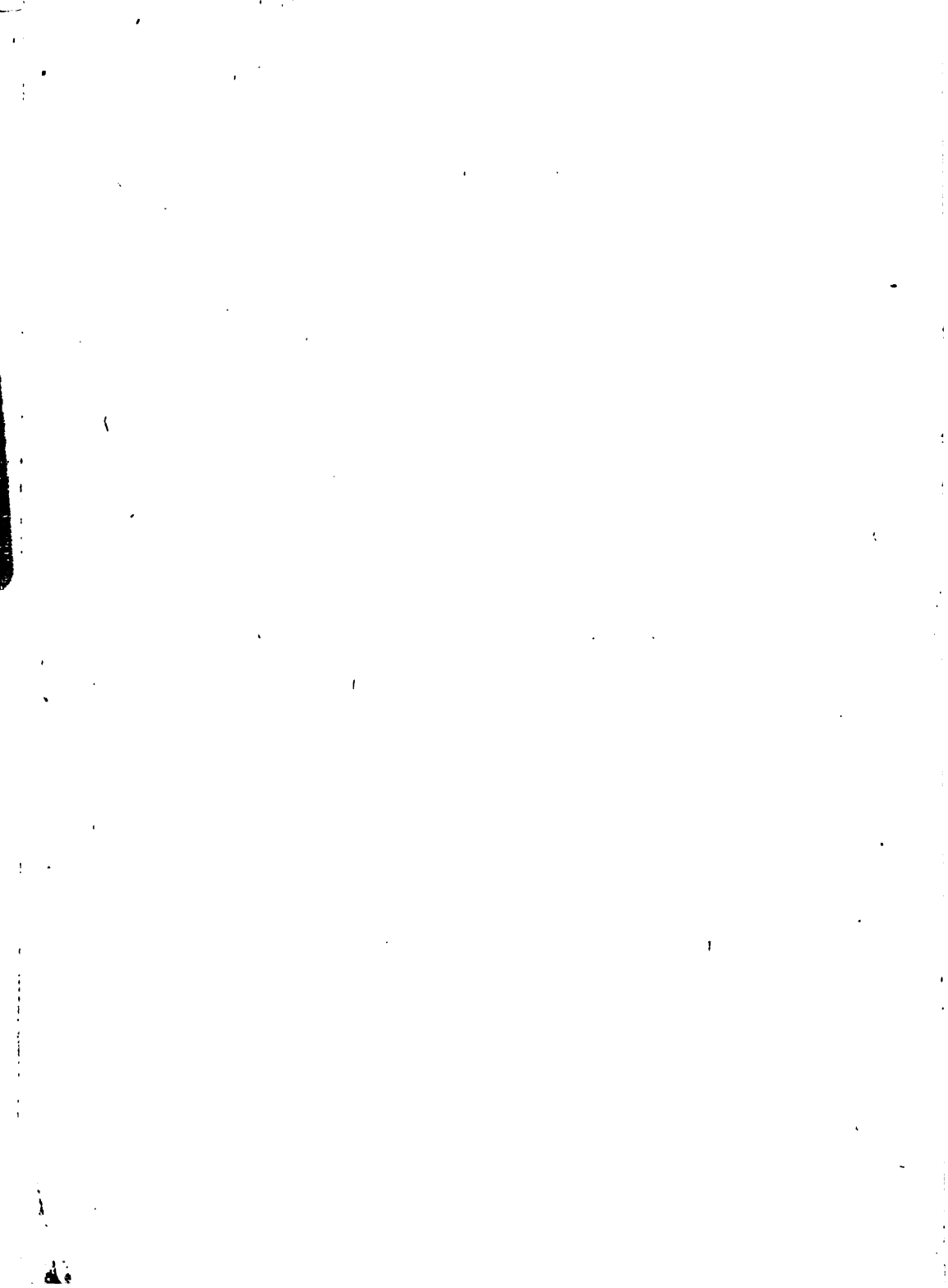


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REYNARD THE FOX AT THE COURT  
OF THE LION KING NOBEL







# ·THE·HISTORY·OF· ·REYNARD·THE·FOX·

· WITH · SOME · ACCOUNT · OF · HIS ·  
· FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND ASSOCIATES:  
· A · FREE · RENDERING · INTO · VERSE · &  
· OF · THE · TRANSLATION · MADE · IN · &  
· THE · DAYS · OF · KING · EDWARD · THE  
· FOURTH · BY · WILLIAM · CAXTON; &  
· FROM · THE · DUTCH · PROSE · VERSION  
· OF · THE · STORY; WITH · THE · ADDIT  
· ION · OF · SOME · PARTICULAR · MAT:  
· TERS · NOT · THEREIN · SET · &  
· DOWN · BUT · VERY · & ·  
· NEEDFUL · TO · BE ·

· KNOWN ·



· BY · F · S · ELLIS ·

· WITH · DEVICES · BY · WALTER · CRANE ·  
· LONDON: DAVID · NUTT ·  
· 270 · 271 · STRAND · MDCCCXCIV ·

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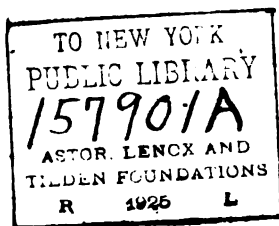
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111e ed. of 1897

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ASSOCIATES. WITH · GLOSSARIAL  
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AN · INDEX-SUMMARY · OF · CHIEF  
MATTERS · CONTAINED · IN · THE  
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THE  
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# GLOSSARIAL NOTES.

## INDEX-SUMMARY OF CHIEF MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE STORY.



Proem.

**T**HE story that I here rehearse  
In parables of points diverse,  
Holds learning good of worth and mark,  
Though told oft-times in sayings dark,  
With subtle knowledge of such things  
As suit the ways of lords and kings  
When they in council gathered are  
To hold discourse of peace and war,  
Or priests and prelates keep their court,  
Or merchants and the common sort.  
And with good will is made this book,  
That worthy folk therein may look,  
And of its wisdom and its wit  
May profit have and benefit.  
They, noting the deceitful wiles  
By which the world the world beguiles,  
Should use them, not for evil ends,  
To hoodwink or deceive their friends,  
But wotting of them, should be ware  
Of cunning trap or flattering snare.  
And whatso man would save his skin,  
Should buy this book and read therein,  
Not lightly, but with study deep,  
Would he therefrom good harvest reap.

Proem.      For he who cons it o'er and o'er,  
                Shall by degrees see more and more,  
                What subtle wit it doth contain,  
                And how therefrom a man may gain  
                Knowledge to shun the world's annoy,  
                And live his life in peace and joy.



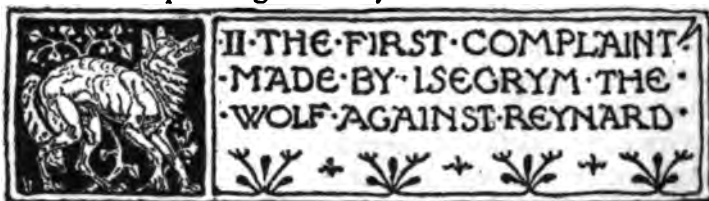


·HOW·THE·LION·KING·NOBEL·  
·SENT·OUT·HIS·MANDEMENT·  
·THAT·ALL·BEASTS·SHOULD·  
·COME·TO·HIS·COURT· ❧❧

**T** WAS near the time of Pentecost,  
When clean forgot is winter's frost,  
And once more cometh welcome spring,  
And the wild woods are burgeoning  
With tender leaves and blossoms sweet,  
While all the earth beneath our feet  
Becomes a fresh and fragrant floor,  
With countless flowers besprinkled o'er,  
And merry birds on every tree  
Make love with joyous melody  
In sweet discordant harmony,  
That of the beasts the noble King,  
Who rules and governs every thing,  
The Lion, who doth hold his sway  
So that no beast may say him nay,  
Proclaimed that he for great and small,  
Would, during this high festival,  
Hold a full Court, and audience grant  
To plea of every suppliant;  
So sent his messengers about,  
To make it known the woods throughout;  
And thither flocked at his command  
Each beast that lived within the land,  
Save Reynard Fox, who knew right well,

I. The King  
holds Court.

I. The King That many a one a tale could tell  
 holds Court. Of his sly ways and cunning tricks,  
 And on him such high crimes might fix,  
 That hardly could he hope for grace,  
 Should he there show his artful face.  
 So surely, when the beasts were met,  
 And round King Lion duly set,  
 Not one was there from Mouse to Ox,  
 But had complaint 'gainst Reynard Fox.



II. The Wolf  
 complains.

**F**IRST came the Wolf, old Isegrym,  
 As all the beasts made way for him,  
 His friends and lineage standing by,  
 As thus he spake complainingly.  
 "High mighty Prince, my Lord and King,  
 List to the plaint that here I bring,  
 Praying that you, through your great might,  
 Will justice do, upholding right  
 Against this Reynard's wickedness,  
 Who hath to me wrought sore distress,  
 Making a burden of my life,  
 And wronging grievously my wife.  
 Into my house he came unknown,  
 And noxious ordure hath he thrown  
 Into my children's eyes, that they

Are waxen blind from that same day.  
For this offence a day was set,  
Duly this villain Fox I met,  
Who said he'd swear upon the saints  
Good answer unto my just complaints.  
But when we brought the holy book,  
Then he with fear and trembling shook,  
Turned tail, and dastard-like he stole  
Back to his lurking-place or hole,  
As though he nothing set thereby,  
Or reckoned it not worth a fly.  
If this be true, ask every beast  
Assembled here at this high feast ;  
Demand aloud if aught there be  
In which the Fox can gainsay me,  
And if my words be not, forsooth,  
The plain, straightforward, honest truth.  
My Lord, no sort of will have I  
To dwell on his malignity ;  
"Twould tire your patience as I trow,  
Were I to set before you how  
A thousand crimes this knave hath done,  
Beyond this fore-recited one.  
But life too short were to unfold  
The villainies I leave untold,  
And his gross crimes against my wife  
Can be apaid but with his life.  
I trust to you and all my friends,  
That he therewith shall make amends."

II. The Wolf  
complains.



III. Cour-  
toys' ill sort.

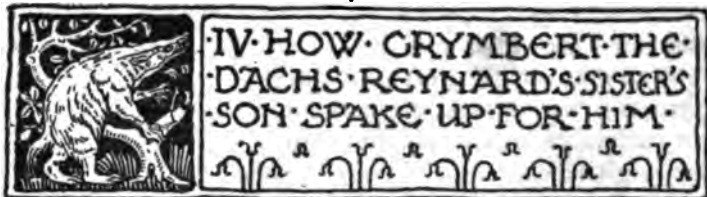
**S**TRUCK with these words were all around,  
And then stood forth Courtoys the Hound,  
A lean fed dog, and forthwith he  
Spoke out his plaint most eagerly.  
"Great King, 'twas in the winter cold,  
When iron frost the earth did hold,  
I but one pudding had for meat,  
That stole the Fox, and straight did eat."  
Tybert the Cat was next to speak,  
A well-washed puss, fat, smooth and sleek,  
But bright fire flashed from out his eyes  
As thus he spoke in angry wise.  
"My Lord the King," he cried aloud,  
"Dozens I see among this crowd  
Who have of Reynard suffered wrongs,  
And if they but let loose their tongues,  
To clear himself he'll have ado,  
Should half they say of him be true.  
But for that tale that Courtoys told  
Already, years gone by, 'twas old.  
'Twas I that might complain, not he,  
That pudding did belong to me;  
One night I stole it at the mill,  
While the fat miller slept his fill.

Courtoys had best that tale let lie,  
Small credit will he get thereby."

III. Cour-  
toys' ill sort.

**T**HEN outspake Panther, fierce and grim,  
" Tybert, methinks thou hast a whim  
To shield this robbing, murdering thief,  
And for his crimes to gain relief.  
No love doth in his bosom spring  
For living man ; our Lord the King  
Might be despoiled of crown and throne,  
So that he got some toothsome bone ;  
So that he got a fat hen's leg,  
He'd let his dearest friend go beg.  
List now what sort of love he bare  
Towards Cuwaert, the good guileless Hare,  
Who hath the King's protection here,  
Yet stands of him in mortal fear.  
He promised Cuwaert him to teach  
To say his 'Credo' and to preach,  
So that he might a parson be,  
And learn the children A B C.  
I scarce need say, a great deal cuter  
Than the poor scholar was the tutor.  
He made him 'twixt his legs to go,  
And high-voiced cried 'Credo! Credo!'  
It chanced my way lay there along,  
And wondering much to hear that song,  
I went anear, and did espye  
Sly Reynard, who gave o'er that cry  
Once more to play his wonted play

III. Cour- As he hath done for many a day;  
toys' ill sort. For the Hare seized he by the throat,  
As he took up his 'Credo' note,  
And but I stayed that cruel strife,  
Widowed had been poor Cuwaert's wife.  
See how the wound still showeth fresh,  
Where he hath torn the tender flesh.  
My Lord the King, ne'er be it said  
Ye left such crimes unpunished;  
Who thus hath sinned against your peace  
Should of his crimes have no release.  
I pray thee now good counsel heed,  
And to this villain give due meed,  
Which shall be, as your subjects hope,  
Short shrift, and any length of rope."  
"Well said, friend Panther, by my troth,"  
Quoth Isegrym, "I too were loth  
To see this rascal go scot free  
Of all his crime and villainy."



IV. The  
Dachs ex-  
plains.

**N**AY! nay!" then cried out Grymbert Dachs,  
"I hold these but unkind attacks  
Against my mother's brother dear,  
While he to answer is not near.  
Sir Isegrym, 'tis evil said,

The King and Court thou hast misled,  
 Thus doth the ancient proverb tell,  
 'Speaks mouth of foe but rarely well.'  
 Ill doth it your foul mouth beseem  
 To speak thus of the Fox, my eme.  
 Were it decided without grudge  
 By some upright, impartial judge,  
 Which of the two deserved the most,  
 A stout rope and a hanging-post,  
 I've not much doubt if you or he  
 Would dangle first upon a tree.  
 For my part I have little fear,  
 Should Reynard in this Court appear,  
 And the good King give ear to him,  
 As unto thee, Sir Isegrym,  
 But what thou'dst hang thy head for shame,  
 While clear shone forth my uncle's name;  
 Down on thy knees thou straight should'st fall,  
 Forgiveness begging of us all.  
 How many times have your sharp teeth  
 Been my poor uncle's skin beneath,  
 Spoiling his fine brown russet fell?  
 More oft I trow than tongue can tell.  
 Think you, how scurvily ye've dealt  
 With one who towards ye kindly felt.  
 Forget ye how that plaice he threw  
 From out a cart 'twixt him and you?  
 And how ye eat it up alone,  
 Leaving him nought but prickly bone  
 Which e'en your teeth, so strong and white,

IV. The  
 Dachs ex-  
 plains.

IV. The  
Dachs ex-  
plains.

Failed to crunch up, hard as ye bite ?  
Forget ye too the bacon flitch ?  
Nay, sneer not so, ye well know which,  
'Twas that which he so deftly stole,  
And then you gobbled up the whole,  
And when he asked it might be parted,  
A snarling grin at him ye darted,  
Saying, ' Dear Reynard, take your share  
From out my jaws—if you but dare.'  
And yet through that same flitch of bacon,  
He in a sack was wellnigh taken  
By the quickhanded farmer's wife,  
And barely came off with his life.  
Most cruelly you treated him,  
Foul-mouthed, hard-hearted Isegrym.  
Great Lords, think ye that this was good ?  
Oh ! if ye fully understood,  
Then would ye know what sorry lies  
This Wolf is steeped in to his eyes.  
And then he'd raise some wicked strife  
Saying the Fox had harmed his wife !  
The truth was this, my uncle saw,  
How heavy on her lay his paw,  
And so he took her little dainties,  
In truth my uncle quite a saint is.  
Ask the poor wife, and she will tell  
If Reynard served her ill or well.  
Then Cuwaert too, the silly Hare,  
His foolish grievance must declare ;  
May Reynard not chastise his scholar,

Shaking him gently by the collar ?  
 'Tis quite against all common sense  
 To make of this a grave offence ;  
 If scholars may not be corrected,  
 How can improvement be expected ?  
 This tale, too, of Courtoys the Hound,  
 At first sight hath an evil sound,  
 But Tybert told us how was got  
 That pudding, stolen from the pot  
 Of one who was his kindly host,  
 And ' Evil got is evil lost,'  
 '*Male quesisti et male*  
*Perdidisti,*' thus pardee  
 Saith the old proverb, trite and true—  
 Eh ! Master Courtoys, what say you ?  
 Is Reynard then so much to blame  
 When you with him bear equal shame ?  
 If stolen goods he took away,  
 Is that so great a crime I pray ?  
 Indeed it is my firm belief,  
 That knowing him to be a thief,  
 He took the pudding lest that he  
 Might suffer the law's penalty.  
 If he had hanged him out of hand,  
 According to the law's command,  
 He had not therein much misdone,  
 To rid the world of such an one.  
 But Reynard is of noble birth  
 As any man that treads the earth.  
 My uncle gentle is and true,

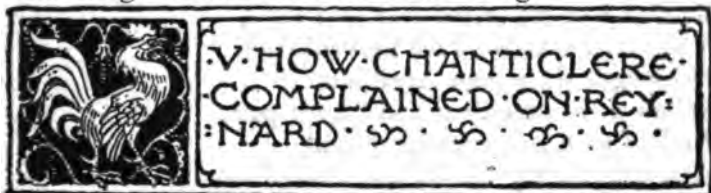
IV. The  
 Dachs ex-  
 plains.

IV. The  
Dachs ex-  
plains.

That will his priest vouchsafe to you ;  
For by that priest's advice he lives,  
And good heed to his counsel gives.  
If you doubt me, why then you can  
Just ask that worthy clergyman.  
He never eats but once a day,  
But in his cell doth fast and pray ;  
For worldly joys he hath no care,  
And wears always a shirt of hair ;  
Rather than he should heaven lose  
He walks with nail-points in his shoes  
Turned heavenwards, thus symbolizing  
(In manner of his own devising)  
When he feels twinge of pain intense,  
The prickings of his conscience ;  
While to escape the devil's mesh  
For twelve months he's not tasted flesh.  
His castle with its towering wall  
He's turned into a hospital,  
And leaving all the vain world's stage,  
Hath builded him an hermitage ;  
There reads he ever holy lore,  
Fisheth or hunteth he no more ;  
No lust hath he to gather gold,  
As he was wont to do of old,  
But humbly lives on scanty alms,  
Spending his time in singing psalms ;  
Great penance doth he for past sins,  
And thereby he much reverence wins  
Of those who see him watch and pray,

Preparing for his passing day.  
 He longs to rest beneath the sod,  
 So that his soul may be with God."  
 A teardrop stood in Grymbert's eye,  
 As thus he spake with heavy sigh;  
 When all at once, with sudden shock,  
 They saw good Chanticleere the Cock,  
 Come down the hill with sorry cheer,  
 Walking with sobs beside a bier,  
 Whereon a lovely hen lay dead,  
 Shortened by Reynard of her head,  
 And Chanticleere, before the King,  
 Knowledge of this foul deed would bring.

IV. The  
 Dachs ex-  
 plains.



**P** OOR Chanticleere doth droop his wings,  
 And a most doleful note he sings;  
 Beside the bier walk two fair dames,  
 Crayant and Cantart are their names,  
 Sisters to her who is no more,  
 And bitterly they weep therefore.  
 From Holland right up to Ardenne  
 Eye ne'er beheld two finer hens.  
 Long lighted tapers do they bear,  
 In memory of their sister fair;  
 While, for her slain in ruthless guise,

V. The Cock  
 laments.

V. The Cock Well rivers from their mournful eyes,  
lamenta. Sing they, "Alas! and wel-a-way,  
Reynard did our dear Coppen slay."  
Walk too, in sad and mournful mood,  
Two of poor Coppen's latest brood,  
Bearing the bier of their dear mother,  
While strive they their deep grief to smother.  
So come they all before the King,  
And Chanticleere high-voiced doth sing,  
"Merciful King and gracious Lord,  
List now to our sad plaintive word,  
So must you in abhorrence hold  
The crimes which we to you unfold,  
By that foul miscreant Reynard done,  
The vilest wretch 'neath heaven's sun.  
No longer since than April last,  
When skies were clear and winter past,  
I felt, I own it, somewhat proud,  
And clapped my wings, and crowed aloud,  
Boasting my ancient lineage,  
And all my goodly heritage.  
Fifteen fair children had I then,  
Hatched by my wife, my dear Coppen;  
Seven daughters, lovely to behold,  
And eight fair sons, strong, stout and bold.  
Within a garden walled about  
They lived, and rarely went thereout,  
While in a shed built up therein,  
Lived six fierce dogs who tore the skin  
Of any beasts who entered there;

So dwelt my children free from care.  
Thereat felt Reynard envy great,  
And envy grew to angry hate,  
Because so surely kept were they,  
That though he heard them romp and play,  
He could by no means come thereby,  
The dogs too fierce, the wall too high ;  
Yet round and round the wall he'd trudge,  
Till with the dogs I made him budge,  
For on him they so fiercely set,  
I doubt if he forgets it yet,  
They leapt upon him from the bank,  
And wellnigh had him by the shank ;  
To see how he did run and smoke,  
Was for us all a hearty joke.  
Reynard no more our wall would climb,  
Quit were we of him for a time.  
At last he comes as pious hermit,  
In holy habit as they term it,  
Bringing to me a royal letter,  
What introduction could be better ?  
'Twas sealed with your own princely ring,  
And said that our good Lord the King,  
Who of the state doth guide the helm,  
Had made such peace throughout the realm,  
That henceforth neither fowl nor beast,  
E'en from the greatest to the least,  
Should practise harm or scathe toward other,  
But live as brother should with brother.  
He gravely told me, he no more

V. The Cock  
laments.

V. The Cock In riot lived as heretofore,  
laments. But passed his life within a cloister,  
As solitary as an oyster ;  
That all day long he told his beads,  
Repenting him of his ill-deeds,  
And all his life hereafter meant  
To live as holy penitent.  
He showed to me his pilgrim's gown,  
Which right unto his toes reached down,  
And the hair shirt he wore thereunder  
My reverence did excite, and wonder.  
And then said he, 'Sir Chanticleer,  
Thou needst no more hold me in fear ;  
Henceforth no flesh shall pass my jaws,  
My diet is but hips and haws,  
Or just a crust of barley bread,—  
'Twill not be long ere I am dead ;  
My life has wellnigh reached its goal,  
And I must think about my soul ;  
Forth fare I, in good purpose strong,  
To say sext, none, and evensong ;  
May heaven save you, dearest friend,  
And send us both a holy end.'  
Guileless he seemed as child new-born,  
Lying him down beneath a thorn.  
Then felt I merry, glad, and gay,  
And crowing went upon my way,  
Taking a stroll without the wall,  
Surrounded by my children all.  
Alack ! alack ! that treacherous thief

Soon plunged me into deepest grief,  
For as we passed beside a bush  
I thought I felt a gentle push,  
And snap ! he had my eldest son,  
Of all my brood the dearest one,  
And since thereby our blood he tasted,  
All means to check him seem but wasted ;  
Our savage dogs he doth despise,  
And laughs at hunters' horns and cries,  
In ambush lurks he day and night,  
With everlasting appetite.  
My children once were near a score,  
And now, alas ! they are but four,  
So many hath this villain slain,  
Vile murderer, worse than erewhile Cain.  
Behold my spouse, my Coppen dear,  
Lying before you on her bier :  
He killed her just inside our bounds,  
So was her body by the hounds  
Snatched from this cruel murderous thief.  
Most gracious Lord, regard my grief,  
Have pity on a husband's pang,  
And let this villain Fox go hang."

V. The Cock  
laments.





·VI·HOW·THE·KING·SPAKE·  
·TOUCHING·CHANTICLERE'S·  
·COMPLAINT· ❧ · ❧ · ❧ ·

VI. The  
King's good  
word.

**T**HEN wrathful did King Nobel wax,  
Crying "How now! friend Grymbert Dachs,  
What say ye of your worthy eme,

Who by your tale a saint would seem?  
As I am Lord and Master here,  
He soon shall swing, have thou no fear!  
Poor Chanticlere, it were enough  
To melt a heart of sterner stuff  
Than mine is made of, to hear told  
Such tale of woe as you unfold.  
The beasts shall follow, one and all,  
To Coppen's solemn funeral;  
Shame on the murderer will we cry,  
Singing her vigils mournfully,  
And I and all my lords will take  
Vengeance on Reynard for her sake."  
Forthwith with deepest signs of woe  
Sung was "*Placebo Domino*,"  
With every due and fit oration,  
And ending with the "commendation."  
A marble tomb then raised there was  
Polished and clear as any glass,  
And hewn thereon in letters great  
Was the sad story of her fate:

“Pity poor Coppen, who lies here,  
The well-loved spouse of Chanticleere,  
Had Reynard not snapt off her head,  
Perhaps she had not now been dead ;  
Her father was a wondrous poet,  
And by these lines all men may know it.”

VI. The  
King's good  
word.

**T**HEN did the King a council hold,  
And once more he the story told,  
How every crime beneath the sun  
By this same Reynard had been done.  
They all agreed with one consent,  
Such crimes deserved stern punishment,  
And he must come before the Court  
To answer to his ill report ;  
On no ground should he find excuse,  
For well they knew his every ruse.  
They gave the summons to the care  
Of Bruin the sagacious Bear,  
Who cried, “ Although my skull be thick,  
I think I know each wily trick  
That e'er was played by Reynard Fox ;  
I'll bring him hither in a box.”  
Cried the wise King, “ Beware, Sir Bruin,  
Lest he betray thee to thy ruin ;  
He is a shrewd and artful liar,  
And once deceived my prudent sire,  
Though all throughout the world was he  
Renowned for his sagacity.  
Take my advice and do not boast,

VI. The King's good word. Or ye may count without your host ;  
 Beware, Sir Bruin, and be wise,  
 Dwell not in a fool's paradise."  
 Quoth Bruin, " Good my Lord, let be,  
 Think you the Fox deceiveth me ?  
 I trow I was not born so late  
 But what I'm up to Reynard's date,  
 Perhaps to mock me he may try,  
 But small good will he get thereby."  
 So with his beaver cocked aside,  
 And self-important strut and stride,  
 Forth starts he to find Reynard Fox,  
 Crying, " I'll bring him in a box."  
 How well he on his errand sped,  
 In the next chapter may be read.



VII · HOW · BRUIN · WAS ·  
 SPED · OF · REYNARD · THE ·  
 FOX ·

VII. The Bear's intents.

**S**TARTS Bruin, filled with sanguine hope,  
 That he with any Fox can cope,  
 And cries, " It pleased our worthy King  
 His well-worn saws at me to fling,  
 But of the world he's little knowledge,  
 He ne'er has been, like me, at college ;  
 I know the world and all its ways,  
 To him 'tis but a tangled maze."  
 The season was of pleasant May,  
 Sweet sang the birds on each green spray,

And o'er the landscape far around,  
Pale daisies pied the verdant ground,  
The hawthorn whitened every brake,  
Wherefrom the winds sweet odour take,  
Ere they go whispering through the sedge  
Along the brimming river's edge.  
Hyacinth bells of purple deep  
Awakened from their winter sleep,  
And nature all in wood and dell  
Was keeping its high festival.  
Small heed had Bruin for all this,  
His soul was set on business ;  
To talk to him of flowers and birds  
Were but a foolish waste of words.  
So came he to a darksome wood,  
Which in good stead the Fox oft stood,  
For he therein would swiftly hie  
When horns and hounds were in full cry.  
Each path he knew and each tree bole,  
And had there many a secret hole,  
Where he in sweet repose might hide  
While huntsmen filled the countryside.  
Above, on a steep hill had he  
Fixed his strong castle Malperdy,  
And thitherward must Bruin mount  
To bring sly Reynard to account.  
The sun was hot and Bruin fat,  
So first his coat and then his hat  
He cast aside upon the road  
Ere he came where the Fox abode.

VII. The  
Bear's in-  
tents.

VII. The  
Bear's in-  
tents.

**M**ALPERDY was a castle strong,  
As anyone who came along  
Would quickly find in senses two,  
If the wind from that quarter blew.  
'Twas the best burrow Reynard had,  
And many a time was he right glad,  
His hunted head to hide therein,  
But once there, recked he not a pin  
What his worst foe might do or say,  
Secure he felt, and light and gay.  
When Bruin came to Malperdy,  
Weary and worn and hot was he ;  
He found the gate shut fast and hard,  
But saw no warder there or guard,  
So down he sat upon his tail,  
And loudly thence did Reynard hail,  
Crying, " Hi there ! Are you at home ?  
'Tis Bruin, from the Court I come,  
Sent by command of our great King ;  
You to his presence must I bring  
Before the Court to plead your case,  
If you dare show your rascal face.  
By all that's holy hath he sworn,  
That if his summons you should scorn,  
He'll have the skin from off your back,  
And torture you upon the rack ;  
Or else, in short, he'll have your life,  
Making a widow of your wife.  
Reynard the Fox, be ruled by me,  
Come to the Court and bow your knee,

Clear you from blame and go forth free.”  
Now Reynard lay within the gate,  
Sunning himself from tail to pate,  
Thinking of happy days gone by  
When he had lived right jollily ;  
When no one blamed him for his crimes,  
“ Ah ! ” sighed he, “ those were rare old times.”  
Just then his ear caught Bruin’s roar,  
Quoth he, “ I’ve heard that voice before ; ”  
Then peeping, cried, “ Oh ! that’s it, is it,  
I wonder now what means this visit ? ”

VII. The  
Bear’s in-  
tents.

**S**LY Reynard’s castle, ye must know,  
Had been contrived and builded so,  
With exits and with entries many,  
That he might pass unknown to any.  
The gates looked north, south, west, and east,  
Devised by this most subtle beast,  
And twisted so, and turned about,  
As this went in and that went out,  
That all his foes who entered there,  
Soon cursed the place in dire despair,  
In never ending mazes lost,  
And on the waves of doubting tost,  
Till many a man of many a nation  
Had died of hunger and vexation.  
Though Reynard did not always roam,  
Yet rarely was he found “ at home.”  
Now down he sat a scheme to hatch,  
How he stout Bruin might o’ermatch,

VII. The  
Bear's in-  
tents.

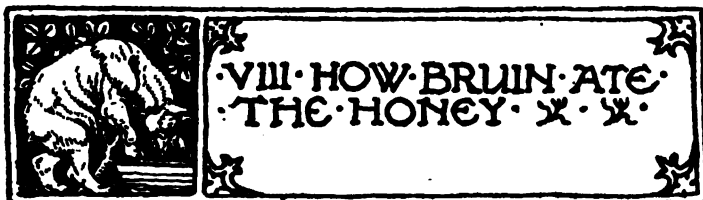
To his foe's shame and his own credit,  
And soon his fertile brain had bred it.  
He washed his face and brushed his hair,  
And came out smiling to the Bear,  
With, "Ah! dear Bruin, how d'ye do?  
This *is* a pleasure, to see you;  
Have you walked all the way from town?  
Step in a while and sit ye down;  
And tell me, how is Mrs. B.  
And all the children? Ah! I see,  
Your walk has made you rather warm;  
Keep out of draughts, or you'll take harm.  
What will you have? A glass of wine?  
Of course you'll stay with us and dine."  
So fast he talked, the Bear I ween  
Could not get in one word between;  
But when at last he made a stop,  
Quoth Bruin, "No sir, not a drop!  
And as to joining you at dinner,  
I'll not break bread with such a sinner.  
Did you not hear me just now say  
What business brought me here to-day?  
Unless you put in a good answer,  
From a rope's end you'll be a dancer."  
Quoth Reynard, with an injured air,  
"Now Bruin, is this just or fair?  
I am a little deaf, I fear,  
And therefore did not clearly hear  
Your most esteemed communication,  
Or you should have my explanation."

Bruin, now comfortably seated,  
 His message once again repeated,  
 At which the Fox cried out, "Alack!  
 What tales are told behind one's back!  
 I'm sorry you have had to-day  
 To travel all this weary way;  
 Surely some one of less account  
 Might have been sent this hill to mount.  
 I beg of you to tell the King,  
 The serious message that you bring  
 Gives me the greatest grief and sorrow,  
 To answer it I'll come to-morrow.  
 Accept of my best thanks, I pray,  
 For the polite and pleasant way  
 You've said all that you had to say.  
 So anxious am I to explain,  
 And with the world be straight again,  
 That with you I'd this instant go,  
 My perfect innocence to show,  
 Had I not just now dined off honey,  
 Such as cannot be bought for money,  
 And am so full, I shouldn't wonder  
 If walking burst me quite asunder."  
 At name of honey, Bruin's eyes  
 Begin to glisten, though he tries  
 To speak as though he hankered not  
 For tasting it the smallest jot.  
 So quoth he in a careless tone,  
 As yea or nay to him were one,  
 "Is honey good to eat, I pray?"

VII. The  
 Bear's in-  
 tents.

VII. The  
Bear's in-  
tents.

I judge it is, from what ye say."  
Quoth Reynard, "If 'tis good or no,  
Yourself shall judge ere hence you go,  
For in a garden close by me,  
Stored up in a great linden tree,  
Is enough honey to supply  
Both you and all your family  
For days, for weeks, for months, for years."  
Cried Bruin, pricking up his ears,  
"Well, just for curiosity,  
I don't mind looking at that tree,  
But Reynard, you should never stuff,  
But stop, when you have had enough."  
"That's proper talk for you great lords,"  
Quoth Reynard, "but it ill accords  
With all the needs a poor man feels,  
Who rarely sits him down to meals  
Where he may calmly take his fill;  
When he does so, don't judge him ill."  
Quoth Bruin, "Well, we are a pair  
In loving honey; tell me where  
That honey lies of which ye spoke;  
It was but a pretence and joke  
To say I knew not honey well,  
For the plain wholesome truth to tell,  
There's nothing in the whole creation  
That gives me quite such delectation;  
Show me that honey without end,  
And I till death will be your friend."



**I** THOUGHT, good cousin, ye were joking,  
 And at me your small fun were poking,"  
 Quoth Reynard, as he cocked his eye,  
 "Oh! Bruin, Bruin, sly boy, sly."  
 Quoth Bruin, "Say thereof no more,  
 But let us to the honey store."  
 Reynard felt mighty pleased to see  
 The turn things took, and so quoth he,  
 "Well, to speak truth of this same honey,  
 I would not part therewith for money;  
 I would not show it to my brother,  
 My sister, father, or my mother;  
 But to prove that 'twixt you and me  
 Exists no animosity,  
 I to you such a feast will give,  
 You'll not forget it while you live."  
 "Well, come," quoth Bruin, "Let us go,  
 Truth is I do love honey so,  
 That I'd give up all hopes of heaven,  
 And sell for slaves my children seven;  
 Well, yes, and Mrs. Bruin too,  
 And all my many friends taboo,  
 Excepting, dear friend, only you,  
 Could I enjoy, devoid of strife,

VIII. The  
 Bear's re-  
 ward.

VIII. The  
Bear's re-  
ward.

Honey to last me all my life."  
" Well, know," thus Reynard's story ran,  
" There lives hard by a worthy man,  
Whose name is Lantfert, and he hath  
Honey enough to fill a bath ;  
Though ye feast on it for a year  
It will suffice you, have no fear.  
I'll show you how ye this can gain,  
As ye of honey are so fain ;  
But firstly let it be agreed  
Between us, for this friendly deed  
You'll do your best to get me ease  
From all my cruel enemies ;  
Those who have sent you here, in short,  
To hale me to the Royal Court."  
" Reynard," cried Bruin, " It is done,  
So let us shake hands thereupon."  
Cried Reynard, " Ye shall eat all day,  
And barrels have to take away,  
As many as will load a wain,  
And if it please you send again."  
Then Bruin held his sides and laughed  
As though strong waters he had quaffed ;  
So roystering was his merriment  
That he was wellnigh double bent.  
Reynard but murmured, " Not so fast,  
He longest laughs, who laughs the last."  
Then said he, " Without more delay  
We'll see hereto, this very day ;  
Nothing for me is too great pains,

So it your valued friendship gains.  
Towards you I bear such holy love  
As lives 'mong saints in heaven above,  
Of all my lineage none there is  
That can compare with you ywis."  
Thought Bruin, "He seems in no hurry,  
While I'm all over in a flurry."  
At last the Fox cried, "Well, let's go,  
You'll something have to bear, you know."  
Aside then, as he winks and pokes  
His tongue into his cheek, "Hard strokes  
You'll bear, for surely you'll be beaten  
Most soundly ere you've honey eaten."  
But Bruin marked not what he meant,  
Nor dreamed 'twas Reynard's ill intent,  
That he should bear stiff chastisement,  
But trotted on to Lantfert's yard,  
Licking his lips for his reward.  
Blithe was he as a bird in May  
Who singeth all the livelong day,  
So honey-blind and mad was he,  
That he ne'er dreamed of treachery.

VIII. The  
Bear's re-  
ward.

**N**OW Lantfert was a carpenter,  
Within whose yard trees scattered were,  
And midmost lay a fair round oak,  
But lately felled with sturdy stroke,  
In which, with will to split in two,  
Were wedges driven, through and through,  
So that it now wide gaping stood,

VIII. The  
Bear's re-  
ward.

Apart kept by the splints of wood.  
This gladdened Reynard's heart to see,  
Nought for his game could better be.  
Quoth he, "Dear cousin, this great oak  
Is the same tree of which I spoke;  
I said it was a linden-tree,  
But that's small matter you'll agree."  
"So long as we the honey find,  
The tree will trouble nought my mind,"  
Quoth Bruin, "How shall I begin,  
That I therefrom may honey win?"  
Quoth Reynard, "See you not this cleft?  
Put in your right paw, now your left,  
And then just right between your toes  
Stick in your handsome, pointed nose;  
There, now for honey you are warm,  
Eat not enough to do you harm,  
For if to any ill ye came,  
On me would fall the scathe and blame."  
"Nay, Reynard, think you I'm a fool?  
Full well I know that golden rule,  
Always to eat in moderation,  
There's nought like that for sanitation."  
Quoth Reynard, "My instructions mind,  
Push your head well in, and you'll find  
Of sweetness such a plenteous store,  
I warrant me, ye'll want no more."  
With that the wedges out he twitched,  
Sprung to the oak, as if bewitched,  
Holding poor Bruin's head and paws

As tight as 'twere the devil's claws.  
Lightly skipped Reynard on a bough,  
Crying, "Enjoy the honey now,  
Music is good at dinner-time,  
So listen to a merry rhyme,  
'Tis only just a simple song  
I made up as we came along."  
Then twanged he gently on his harp,  
And sang with voice clear, loud, and sharp :

VIII. The  
Bear's re-  
ward.

**W**HEN next you go a Fox to trap,  
Bruin ! Bruin !  
Beware lest you by some mishap,  
Catch ruin ! ruin !  
Perhaps the Fox may be your match,  
Bruin ! Bruin !  
And set another trap to catch  
You in ! you in !  
And so you would the Fox betray  
To ruin ! ruin !  
Then farewell till another day,  
Bruin ! Bruin !' "

Then struggles the outwitted Bear,  
With roars and howls he rends the air,  
But though he strong and hardy is,  
His strength will not avail to this,  
He's fast as in a blacksmith's vice,  
Or locked and frozen in the ice.  
He pulls with all his might and main,

VIII. The  
Bear's re-  
ward.

But finds his efforts lost and vain :  
Essays he then the Fox to coax,  
Saying, " I know 'tis but a hoax  
That you are playing off on me,  
Stick in the wedge, and when I'm free,  
Of all beasts you shall be the King,  
And I your slave in everything."  
Then Reynard laughed, then Bruin roared,  
And loudly his hard fate deplored,  
Till out ran Lantfert hastily,  
Wondering what all this coil might be,  
And bearing in his hand a hook ;  
Short space needs he around to look,  
For straight before him doth he see  
Bruin held fast within the tree  
By nose and paws, while he doth beat  
The earth with both his hinder feet.  
Then Reynard cried, " Well, this is funny,  
You don't seem to enjoy the honey,  
I fear you find it somewhat thick,  
But here comes Lantfert with a stick,  
He'll poke it down your throat to ease you,  
There's nothing he'll not do to please you."  
Thus having said, away trots he  
Toward his stronghold of Malperdy.  
First Lantfert Bruin well belabours,  
Then off he runs to rouse his neighbours ;  
" Hi ! come, run fast, I've caught a bear,  
Make haste, come quick the fun to share."

**P**ERHAPS it is the strangest feature  
 In all man's many-sided nature,  
 That he should find such joy and pleasure,  
 A joy that scarce hath stint or measure,  
 In giving fellow-creatures pain,  
 E'en though thereby he finds small gain.  
 Yet surely there is no one thing  
 Seems to men's minds such joy to bring  
 As persecution and pursuit  
 Of some poor inoffensive brute.  
 It is not the mere natural wish  
 To furnish forth some savoury dish  
 Of toothsome fowl, or fish, or beast,  
 And make therewith a merry feast;  
 Life to make end of and destroy  
 Seems an unmitigated joy.  
 With what delight some man will say,  
 "I've killed no end of game to-day,"  
 And then gaze proudly all around  
 With air of virtue as profound  
 As though he'd done some glorious action  
 Which he might boast with satisfaction.  
 There is no single thing, in short,  
 Men love so well as what's called sport.  
 Fighting to set two dogs or cocks,  
 Or all day long to scare a fox,  
 To shoot a rabbit, course a hare,  
 Or bait a wretched bull or bear,  
 All these have been, and most are still,  
 Sports that man's heart with joy doth fill;

VIII. The  
 Bear's re-  
 ward.

VIII. The      To persecute his fellow-creature  
Bear's re-      Seems to be inborn in his nature.  
ward.

**T**HEN through the thorp the news soon rang,  
To catch a weapon each man sprang,  
Till there was left nor man nor wife  
But ran as though 'twere for dear life;  
This seized a staff, and that a stake,  
And this a broom, and that a rake,  
For better weapon at a loss  
The priest caught hold of his staff cross,  
While the clerk followed at his tail  
Armed with a heavy threshing flail.  
The priest's wife ran with her distaff,  
Joining the rout with ringing laugh.  
Ran maids in earliest bloom of youth,  
Ran beldames that held ne'er a tooth,  
And the whole crowd had but one will,  
Bruin to beat, and maim, and kill;  
Against him now is each man's hand,  
And he alone the brunt must stand.  
So when he heard the roar and noise  
Of men and women, girls and boys,  
With such strong wrestling was he fain  
To free his head and feet again,  
That out at last he plucked his paws,  
Leaving behind alack ! his claws;  
And from the cleft his head he tears,  
With the sad loss of both his ears,  
While ere he could his freedom win,

From his poor nose he tore the skin.  
Thus was he in a grievous plight,  
Scarce could be seen more piteous sight.  
Then straightway at the ill-starred beast  
Ran forthwith Lantfert and the priest,  
And all the parish folk at once  
Rained blows upon poor Bruin's sconce.  
E'en so when men in trouble get,  
Against them one and all are set,  
And crimes they thought were quite forgot,  
Are brought against them piping hot,  
And all their sins, by all the world,  
At their ill-fated heads are hurled.  
Ill fared it now with this poor Bear,  
Ran at him folk from far and near ;  
At once the ploughman left his tillage,  
And shouting hurried down the village.  
The smith, the fuller, and the baker,  
The carpenter and deaf shoemaker,  
Old Hugelyn who a-halting goes,  
And Ludolf with the broad long nose,  
All of whom ugly weapons carry  
Wherewith the Bear to beat and harry.  
Long-fingered Bertolt ran with hook,  
And Ottram tall with cruel crook,  
Batkyn, and Ave Abelquack,  
And Dame Bave with the crooked back,  
And every maid, and every man,  
They skipped, they hopped, they jumped, they ran,  
All eager to complete the ruin

VIII. The  
Bear's re-  
ward.

VIII. The  
Bear's re-  
ward.

Of poor unhappy trembling Bruin.  
The parson's cross dealt fearful blows,  
Hitting him right across the nose,  
While the old clerk, with heavy flail,  
Rained strokes as sharp as April hail.  
The man whose weapon was a hook,  
Cried, "I'll soon bring the Bear to book,"  
While an old dame, with iron rod,  
At his poor sides did dig and prod,  
And each one deemed himself in luck  
When he a lusty blow had struck.  
But still amid the howling noise,  
O'er all was heard stout Lantfert's voice;  
He from his father, who made bungs,  
Inherited such power of lungs,  
That ever in the wildest rout  
Resounded still his deafening shout.  
His brother then dealt blow most dread  
On Bruin's poor devoted head,  
Who therewith bolted straight along,  
Rushing the crowd of wives among,  
Toppling them over in a pothor,  
Till they all fell on one another,  
And many a one from out the heap  
Plashed in the river wide and deep.  
'Mong these the parson spied his wife  
Kicking and struggling for her life;  
And ceasing from the Bear's pursuit,  
He loudly bawled, "Confound the brute!  
Dear friends, I didn't mean to swear,

But see, my wife is drowning there !  
I wish I'd never seen the Bear.  
Help! help! good folk, my wife to save,  
And all your sins, however grave,  
Shall forthwith have full grace and pardon,  
You know your faults I ne'er am hard on ;  
Save my dear wife from watery fate,  
And you shall go to heaven straight !  
Save but the wife of your loved parson,  
And then, though murder, theft, and arson  
Your souls had stained, none shall be meet  
For heaven than you, through good St. Peter."  
Then every man, to save his soul,  
Dropped Bruin like a red-hot coal,  
Thinking no more of that poor beast,  
But only how to please the priest.

VIII. The  
Bear's re-  
ward.

**N**OW leaving all these folks to shiver,  
Kicking and struggling in the river,  
We'll follow Bruin down the stream,  
Where scattered he trout, perch, and bream,  
And chub, and roach, and silvery dace,  
With others of the scaly race,  
Who dart aside with fear and wonder,  
While Bruin splashed and plunged like thunder ;  
Three times beneath the waves he sank  
Ere that he reached a shelving bank,  
Whereon he landed with a scramble,  
Tearing his coat with briar and bramble.  
Then just as he got safely out,

VIII. The  
Bear's re-  
ward.

He heard the parson loudly shout,  
"Come back, false thief." Quoth Bruin, "Go it,  
I'll not come back, sir, if I know it."  
He sat and groaned upon the bank,  
Cursing the Fox's treason rank ;  
And then he cursed that honey-tree,  
That brought him in such jeopardy.  
"Fool that I was therein to creep,  
Thrusting my nose and paws so deep,  
Gaining therefrom but grief and tears,  
And losing both my claws and ears ;  
Let me but live, and past all doubt,  
I'll yet pay that vile Reynard out."  
Then bellowed he, and groaned, and sighed,  
Thinking each moment to have died.

N OW hearken how the Fox had fared ;  
Or ever he left Lantfert's yard,  
He seized upon a fine fat pullet,  
And stowed it safely in his wallet,  
Then by a secret path he sped,  
Which he alone knew well to tread,  
And though with running he perspired,  
So joyed he, that he scarce felt tired.  
Quoth he, "A pretty dance I've led  
Friend Bruin, who no doubt is dead,  
But that therein I had a hand  
No man can know in all the land.  
So have I one more lesson taught  
To those who'd bring me to the Court.

To-night ere I retire to rest,  
 My thanks to heaven shall be addressed.  
 Ha! ha! I feel as free as air,  
 Quit of anxiety and care."  
 But hardly had he said these words,  
 When casting his eye riverwards,  
 There the unlucky Bear spied he  
 Resting beneath a hawthorn-tree,  
 And right away his mirth and joy  
 Gave place to sorrow and annoy.  
 No more he triumphed in elation,  
 But bit his lips in dire vexation.  
 Then called he Lantfert fool and ape,  
 That he should let the Bear escape.  
 Quoth he, "This Lantfert is an ass,  
 That good food thus he lets go pass;  
 I had provided the old sinner  
 With a fat, well-fed bear for dinner,  
 For he'd have served for dishes tasty  
 As venison roast or baked in pasty.  
 Oh! Lantfert, ne'er again ywis,  
 You'll get another chance like this."  
 So chiding came he to the river,  
 Where the poor Bear with pain did shiver,  
 Reft of his claws, with aching head,  
 All sick and sore, and wellnigh dead,  
 Lamenting he'd let Reynard's tricks  
 Land him in this unhappy fix.  
 Cries out the Fox in voice of scorning,  
 "Ha! Bruin dear, a merry morning;

VIII. The  
 Bear's re-  
 ward.

VIII. The Bear's reward.

But, bless me ! you don't look quite well ;  
 Why, what's the matter ? Prithee tell ;  
 Say, is there aught that I can do  
 To help, or serve, or comfort you ?  
 Found you the honey disagree  
 With your digestion ? La ! bless me !  
 Something amiss seems with your nose,  
 And surely you have hurt your toes,  
 For both it looks to me are bleeding,  
 I fear you are a doctor needing. .  
 Would you like me to run and find one ?  
 I think I know a skilled and kind one."  
 Thus the poor Bear the Fox derides,  
 Laughing enough to split his sides.  
 Groaned Bruin, " Speak ye thus to me,  
 Adding insult to injury ? "  
 Quoth Reynard, roaring still with laughter,  
 " I cannot think what you've been after.  
 I hope that you paid ready money  
 To Lantfert for that toothsome honey.  
 If I had dreamed that you would steal it,  
 I should be quite ashamed, and feel it  
 Disgraceful, both to you and me ;  
 Bruin, there's nought like honesty !  
 But if you paid and found it nice,  
 I'll get you more at the same price.  
 But on your head you seem to wear  
 A red hood where you carried hair,  
 Is it the guise of monk or friar ?  
 Begin you of your sins to tire ?

A heart like yours, so blithe and merry,  
Should ne'er be shut in monastery.  
Sure he who hath the tonsure given,  
Seeking to fit you thus for heaven,  
Hath been too nimble with his shears,  
And clipped not only hair, but ears,  
And some vile thief your gloves hath reft,  
Your hands seem bare, both right and left,  
Dead to all earthly joys I ween,  
Ye now may go and sing compline."  
As all these gibes poor Bruin heard,  
Deep wrath within his bosom stirred,  
The more since he no means could see  
To wreak him on his enemy;  
But thought it better for that day  
To let the Fox have all his say.  
Answered he therefore not a word,  
But presently himself bestirred,  
And leapt into the river wide,  
Swift swimming to the other side,  
Then took his way towards the Court,  
Fulfilled of shame, and lost in thought,  
Pauper of pride, but rich in fears  
What shape he'd cut without his ears,  
And dreading of some loud guffaws  
When his friends saw he'd lost his claws.  
He scarce could walk, yet walk he must,  
Wentling along through mire and dust,  
Till his maimed forelegs felt so sore,  
That they would serve his turn no more,

VIII. The  
Bear's re-  
ward.

VIII. The  
Bear's re-  
ward.

But on his hind-legs went he prancing,  
And thus it was bears first learned dancing.  
So lastly to the Court he came,  
O'ercome with anger, grief and shame,  
When out the courtiers ran pell mell,  
Wondering what strange sight now befell,  
For in this mass of dirt and ruin  
None recognized the once gay Bruin.  
At last the King with wondering stare  
Cried, "What! how! when! Is this the Bear?  
Can this, all dabbled in his gore,  
Be our esteemed ambassador?  
Good heavens! Who thus hath wounded him,  
And sent him back in this sad trim?  
No longer lively, brisk, alert,  
Wellnigh to death he seemeth hurt;  
I fear me much from what I see  
He hath kept no good company."  
Feebly the Bear cried, "King, good morrow,  
List! list! Oh list! my tale of sorrow."



· IX · THE · COMPLAINT ·  
· OF · THE · BEAR · UPON ·  
· THE · FOX ·    x · x · x ·

IX. The  
Bear's ill  
tale.

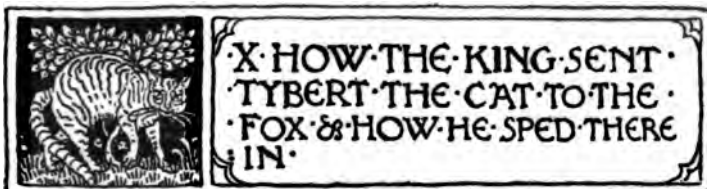
**H**USHED was the laugh, and stilled the joke,  
As Bruin raised his head and spoke :  
"Almost too weary and too faint  
Am I to utter my complaint;

Thou seest how handled I have been,  
As ne'er before was beast I ween.  
To you I cry, avenge my wrongs,  
To Reynard all this shame belongs.  
Most grossly hath he me deceived,  
In ways that scarce would be believed;  
Swiftly must you avenge you for  
Insults to your ambassador.  
From my forefeet my claws are torn,  
From off my head my ears are shorn,  
And on my face is left ywis  
Scant cheek for Mrs. B. to kiss."  
The King wellnigh with anger burst,  
Quoth he, "Ye say the Fox this durst?  
Ne'er suffered I such gross offence  
In all my long experience.  
Reynard shall to account be brought  
With vengeance dire, as swift as thought.  
So swear I by my sacred crown  
That I will rain such judgment down  
On him, that ere another morn  
He'll grieve that ever he was born.  
Yea, though he were my own twin brother,  
I'll leave no stone upon another  
Of his stronghold of Malperdy,  
While that his wife and family  
Without a shelter, house, or home,  
Shall henceforth o'er the wide world roam,  
And without grace or mercy he  
Shall dangle from a gallows tree."

IX. The  
Bear's ill  
tale.

IX. The  
Bear's ill  
tale.

Then summoned he each wisest brute,  
Of cunning deep, of sense acute,  
Demanding their advice and aid  
How Reynard might be best apaid.  
"For," cried the King, "beneath the sun  
No fouler crimes have e'er been done;  
The safety of our kingdom rocks  
'Neath this gross outrage of the Fox."  
Straightway the councillors declare,  
That by some means, or foul or fair,  
The culprit must be brought to bay,  
And should be summoned that same day  
There to abide his condemnation  
To prison, death, or confiscation;  
And if he would avoid such fate,  
He must himself exonerate  
From every foul and monstrous crime  
That doth his way of life begrime.  
'Twas then agreed the Cat should try  
If he could not the Fox outvie  
In trickery and dissimulation,  
And thus do service to the nation,  
For he was by all men's admission  
A wary, skilful politician;  
And he 'twas thought by hook or crook  
Might bring the wily Fox to book.



**T**HEN seated on his royal throne,  
 The King, in grave and solemn tone,  
 Addressed the Cat with air profound,  
 His courtiers standing all around.  
 "Tybert, we now appoint you for  
 Our envoy and ambassador,  
 To summon here the recreant Fox,  
 Whose ways are most unorthodox.  
 Tybert, forget not, I beseech,  
 How far back doth your lineage reach,  
 Much farther back than mice and rats,  
 Which but invented were for cats,  
 And foolish folks who sometimes curse them,  
 Were only made that they might nurse them.  
 Never forget, I pray, that ye  
 Spring from our old nobility.  
 The Fox in you hath great affiance,  
 And so I hope for his compliance,  
 For he'll scarce fail at your request  
 Respect to pay to our behest.  
 And let him by your voice be warned,  
 That if our royal command be scorned,  
 On him we'll have no more compassion,  
 But hang him without further fashion ;

X. Tybert's  
 hard days.

X. Tybert's And then I will, as sure as fate,  
hard days. The whole Fox race exterminate."  
Quoth Tybert, with most rueful face,  
"Hear me, my Lord, by your good grace;  
He who hath counselled you to send  
Me on this work is not my friend;  
I am but a poor feeble creature,  
And of a mild retiring nature;  
And if a lordly towering Bear  
Reynard did neither fear nor spare,  
How can I hope to bring him here?  
Perchance 'twill cost me just as dear.  
My lord, why should a Cat succeed  
Where a Bear had such evil speed?"  
"Nay, nay, Sir Tybert," quoth the King,  
"This work ye may to good end bring,  
For well-learned art thou, quick and wise,  
Fulfilled of wit in all men's eyes,  
And plenteous therefore is my hope  
That with this villain thou mayst cope,  
For craft with craft may better fight  
Than mere brute force that lacks foresight."  
"Most noble Sir," the Cat replied,  
"No skill is known till it be tried;  
And since you force on me this post,  
I'll do my best at any cost;  
May heaven grant me grace and favour  
To bring the Fox to good behaviour,  
But for the task I little yearn,  
Lest Reynard do me some ill turn."

“Pooh! pooh!” the King cried, “I insist!  
Tybert, thou art a pessimist.”

X. Tybert's  
hard days.

**T**YBERT forthwith prepared to start,  
With ready will but heavy heart,  
As one who his misgiving burks,  
Though in his heart ill-boding lurks;  
Some evil-happening fears he  
In the stronghold of Malperdy.  
Just then Saint Martin's bird he kens,  
Flying around—the bane of hens—  
And cries aloud, “Hail, gentle bird,  
Prythee thy wings turn hitherward,  
And on the right side fly for luck,  
Therefrom may I advantage suck.”  
Alas! the bird with evil bode  
Flew on the left side of the road,  
To Tybert's heaviest grief and sorrow,  
Who cried, “Woe worth my work to-morrow.”  
Had the bird on his right side flown  
Great joy and peace his soul had known,  
But when it flew upon the left  
He felt as though his heart were cleft,  
For sorrow felt he and alarm  
At that portent of grief and harm.  
Yet hoped he as men oft-times do,  
When in their hearts they have but rue,  
Trusting his journey might turn out  
More prosperous than he dared to doubt.  
Yet with an anxious heart came he

X. Tybert's In sight of Castle Malperdy,  
hard days. And from a distance he espied  
Reynard, who aired himself outside,  
Enjoying the sun's dying gleam  
As though his life bore ne'er a scam.  
"All heaven's blessings wait on you,"  
Quoth Tybert, as he drew near to.  
"I bring a message from the Court,  
A summons, I may say, in short,  
Respecting some unpleasant charge  
On which I need not here enlarge;  
The King's remarks were rather strong,  
But perhaps he won't detain you long.  
Suppose you come at once with me,  
We'll make it all right presently."  
"My dearest Tybert, how d'ye do?"  
Quoth the Fox, "This *is* kind of you.  
Good luck be yours where'er ye go,  
I think you're looking thinner, though,  
Than when we last together met,  
And caught that rabbit in the net.  
Say you that you a message bring  
From our most gracious Lord the King?  
Come with you? Why, of course I will;  
But pray walk in, the evening's chill,  
Dear nephew, let us make good cheer,  
With bread and cheese and home-brewed beer.  
Slanders should not old friendships sever,  
'Tis a poor heart rejoices never;  
To-night then let us merry be,

And on the morrow off go we,  
 Fast hand in hand and heart with heart,  
 For sure I am you'll take my part  
 Against these cruel accusations  
 Of robberies and malversations,  
 That against me my foes have hurled.  
 Ah! Tybert, 'tis a wicked world ;  
 Of all my kin I trust but you,  
 Real friends, dear Tybert, are but few.  
 Bruin the Bear was lately here,  
 But with no good intent I fear.  
 I marked him for a cruel traitor,  
 Of all ill-will an instigator :  
 And then his manners are so coarse,  
 He'd drag me to the Court by force.  
 He angered me beyond all bounds,  
 I would not for a thousand pounds  
 (Though heaven knows my needs are great)  
 Be seen with such a doddle pate.  
 To-night let's cast off care and sorrow,  
 Leaving all trouble till to-morrow ;  
 And then at very earliest dawn,  
 Ere that the dew has left the lawn,  
 We'll journey courtwards arm in arm,  
 Free or from danger or alarm."  
 Quoth Tybert, "Let's at once away,  
 The broad moon mocks the waning day ;  
 My heart's as light as any feather  
 In this fresh, blithesome springtide weather."  
 Quoth the Fox, "Nay, dear cousin, nay,

X. Tybert's  
 hard days.

X. Tybert's 'Twere safer far with me to stay ;  
hard days. Suspicious 'tis to walk by night,  
Myself I love the broad daylight,  
Besides this is occasion fit  
For us to make a night of it."  
" But," quoth the Cat, " just tell me, please,  
Have ye got nought but bread and cheese ?  
The race of cats, ye must remember,  
Count that poor stuff for belly-timber."  
" Indeed ! " the Fox cried, " Well, that's funny,  
What say ye then to fine new honey ? "  
Quoth Tybert, " I set nought thereby,  
Can ye no better thing supply ?  
Have ye not got in all your house  
A tender rat, or well-fed mouse ? "  
Cried Reynard, " What ! fat mice ye love ?  
By all the saints in heaven above,  
A feast of fat things shalt thou see,  
Such as ne'er once again shall ye  
In all your lifelong days behold,  
E'en though ye lived to age untold :  
A sight such as your wildest dreams  
Ne'er showed ye but in fleeting gleams.  
A priest hard by here owns a barn  
Shall glad your heart, 'twould seem a yarn  
Were I to tell you of the mice  
That ye may have there in a trice.  
No task it were, if one were fain,  
With mice therefrom to fill a wain ;  
And of the sorts, white, red, and grey,

'Twould take a whole long summer's day  
 To tell the various forms and natures  
 Of all those appetizing creatures.  
 They come from France, and Spain, and Norway,  
 Don't be impatient—that's the doorway;  
 I see you eye it—but just wait  
 Until I open that small gate;  
 Then in you'll pop and find such treasure  
 That of your thanks you'll know no measure.  
 But tell me, Tyb, in sober truth,  
 If ye for mice have such a tooth,  
 And if in fact so well ye love them  
 No other thing ye set above them?"  
 "If I love mice! Ye saints in heaven!  
 May all my sins stay unforgiven,  
 And may my soul the devil catch  
 If but of mice I have a batch  
 Such as I heard you now describe.  
 Great heavens! No cat of all my tribe,  
 Or any other tribe or nation,  
 But would abandon his salvation  
 For such a chance of pabulation,  
 Of all the dainties that man gives  
 To cats, there is no thing that lives  
 In grateful memory like a mouse.  
 I've lived in many a well-kept house,  
 Where venison, pheasants, fowls, and doves,  
 And all the things a man most loves,  
 Have been bestowed upon the cat;  
 But flavour of a mouse or rat

X. Tybert's  
 hard days.

X. Tybert's All other flavours doth surpass,  
hard days. He who denies it is an ass.  
But the barn, Reynard, lead therein,  
And though ye had slain all my kin,  
Father and mother, brother, aunt,  
Forgiveness would I freely grant,  
And count it a cheap sacrifice,  
So I but had such fill of mice."

QUOTH Reynard, "Nay, ye do but mock me,  
And your strong oaths I must say shock me.  
But yet, my Tybert, dear old boy,  
'Tis my delight to give you joy ;  
But still, I pray, restrain your rapture,  
And you shall soon see such a capture  
As will not only make you start,  
But thrill you to the very heart."  
Then the Fox, with a knowing wink,  
Said to himself, "I rather think  
The capture will be such as you  
Will have no stomach to renew.  
Though of fat mice you should have plenty,  
I'd not be you for thousands twenty."  
Then said he, speaking now aloud,  
"Dear Tyb, you really do me proud ;  
It always gives me great disgust  
To see old friends old friends distrust ;  
There's nought more hateful than suspicion,  
But come, now for our expedition."  
Quoth Tybert, "That's enough of talk,

Heaven grant that nought our feast should balk ;  
With you o'er all the world I'd wend,  
Well say you friend should trust his friend."  
So went they free from let or hindrance,  
Till plump they stood before the entrance.  
The barn with mud was walled about,  
But a hole left, where in and out  
Entered sly Reynard now and then  
To steal a pigeon, duck, or hen ;  
And only just the night before  
He'd added to his crimes one more,  
Raising the worthy parson's ire,  
Who 'gainst him swore destruction dire ;  
And lest he should again look in,  
Against the hole he'd placed a gryn,  
With long sharp teeth, and spring of steel,  
Dreadful to look at, much less feel,  
And this the sharp-eyed Reynard saw,  
Though lightly littered o'er with straw.  
Quoth he, " Dear Tyb, if you'd make sure  
Of mice, creep through this aperture,  
There will you see them swarming thick  
As grain in corn or barley rick."  
Cried Tybert, " Hark now ! how they squeak !  
Good Lord ! though I'd been dead a week,  
Such music from the grave would rouse me,  
Though friends in wood or lead should house me."  
" Yes ! Yes !" quoth Reynard, " hear them pipe,  
All fat and full as cherries ripe ;  
In, Tybert ! in ! without delay,

X. Tybert's  
hard days.

X. Tybert's hard days. Ye'll have a glorious feast to-day ;  
I'll just wait here till you come out,  
And listen to the merry rout.  
Then, when ye've had your fill of sport,  
Start we together to the Court ;  
Just now I with impatience burn  
That we to my dear wife return."  
Then seeing the Cat stood beside  
The hole, as doubting, "What," he cried,  
"Doth ail thee then, my Tybert dear ?  
Sure of this hole thou hast no fear ?"  
Then Tybert felt the blush of shame  
Burn in his manly cheeks like flame,  
And sprang into the hole, when snap !  
Went down on him the ugly trap,  
And as he struggled to get out,  
He found a cord his neck about,  
And felt that he was wellnigh strangled,  
While the trap's teeth his body mangled.  
He called, he cried, he roared, he yelled,  
All which the Fox with joy beheld,  
And his clear voice o'er Tybert's rang,  
While thus he bowed his kit and sang :

**D**EAR Tybert, I trust you're enjoying the  
mice,  
As you shriek so with joy I've no doubt they  
are nice ;  
The kind invitation you gave me to Court  
I will gladly postpone till you've finished your sport.

“Should you e’er wish again a poor Fox to cajole,  
You will always remember the gryn in the hole,  
And if the King wishes a Fox to undo,  
He must find an ambassador sharper than you.

X. Tybert’s  
hard days.

“Fair words, my dear Tyb, if they’re skilfully used,  
Are very good things, but they’re sadly abused  
By a fool such as you, and dear Tybert, in short,  
Such a blockhead as you will ne’er bring me to Court.

“Then farewell, dear Tybert, and keep a good heart,  
If you *will* stay inside I’m afraid we must part ;  
From my wife and dear children I love not to roam,  
For I’m quite of opinion ‘there’s no place like home.’ ”

Then poking in his nose he said,  
“Eh ! Tybert, art thou well apaid ?  
Hast thou yet had of mice enough ?  
Or find you them a trifle tough ?  
If the priest knew you supped, of course  
He and his son would bring you sauce.  
But, Tybert, thou dost eat and sing,  
Which seems to me a comic thing ;  
Prithee is that the courtly guise,  
That music every guest supplies ?  
Since I left Court I quite forget  
Its manners, ways, and etiquette.  
Ah ! if we now had Bruin too,  
That he might share the meal with you ;  
Would ye not make a pretty pair,  
Who both have tried the Fox to snare ?

X. Tybert's Add Isegrym, and ye would be, oh !  
hard days. Such a delightful little trio."  
All Tybert's struggles were but vain,  
Nowise could he get free again,  
But yowled and mowled and made such noise,  
That soon he waked both priest and boys ;  
And Martinet came shrieking high,  
" Arise ! arise ! hear ye that cry ?  
It is the thief, we have him tight,  
Who robbed us of our hens last night ;  
Let each man bring a stick or stave,  
We'll soon make end of this foul knave."  
Then in high dudgeon rose the priest,  
And stirred all folk from most to least,  
Crying aloud, " The Fox is taken !  
Come one, come all, haste ! haste ! awaken ! "  
Then ran the men all helter skelter,  
Ran boys and women, pilter pelter ;  
The priest unshod and in his shirt,  
Came splashing on through mire and dirt,  
Nought heeding but to bring to grief  
The long-time sought and much-cursed thiet.  
At Tybert first set Martinet,  
From whom sore handling did he get.  
Followed the priest with such a stroke  
As the Cat's tail amidmost broke ;  
Then Martinet, with hideous cry,  
Lodged him a blow across the eye,  
So with that eye from that dread night  
No more saw Tyb sweet heaven's light.

Then the priest, moved with murderous rage,  
'Gainst Tyb would his whole strength engage,  
And lifting up his staff on high,  
Roared, "Thief and villain, thou shalt die!"  
When puss, made desperate by the strife,  
Shrieked out, "I'll dearly sell my life!"  
And therewith seized the parson's calf,  
Biting his leg wellnigh in half.  
"Harrow!" he yelled, "I'm dead! I'm dead!"  
And rolling on the ground he bled  
Till emptied seemed he of life's stream,  
And in a swoon appeared to dream.  
At this screamed forth the parson's wife,  
"Alack! alas! my love! my life!  
Awake! look up! awake, I say!  
Ah me! alack and well-a-day!  
Who was it set that horrid trap,  
The cause of all this dread mishap?  
What, to the life of my dear man,  
Are all the hens since life began?"  
Now all the while the Fox stood by,  
Well hid, but laughing merrily.  
Nought recked he of the goodwife's grief,  
Nor sought to it to give relief,  
But while he wellnigh split with laughter,  
'Twas thus the rascal rudely chaffed her.  
"My dear dame Julock, what's the matter,  
That you make such a coil and clatter?  
For though your husband, I must say,  
Seems now but in a parlous way,

X. Tybert's  
hard days.

X. Tybert's hard days. Would not sweet joy your sorrow leaven  
If the good man went straight to heaven ?  
Doth he not in his sermons teach  
How we should long that place to reach ?  
And if he dies, you soon will find  
Some other husband to your mind.  
'Tis true you are not very young,  
And have a spiteful scolding tongue,  
But you may pick up some poor fool  
Who ne'er heard of the ducking-stool,  
Whereon you made such pretty play ;  
Have you forgotten it, I pray ?  
Well, well, good-bye, a pleasant day."

**T**HEN trotted Reynard to his burrow  
To wait the issue till to-morrow.  
While all were busy with the priest,  
They quite forgot the poor trapped beast,  
Who with one desperate tug and strain,  
That did each joint and sinew sprain,  
At last broke from the gryn, and he  
Thanked heaven that he was once more free.  
Tumbling and wentlyng on he went,  
Till his life's force was wellnigh spent,  
Travelling wearily all night,  
Till at the dawn he came in sight  
Of the King's Court—a sorry vision,  
Gaining less pity than derision,  
For laughter heard he, ill-suppressed,  
When he appeared, so sore distressed.

The coat he took such pains in sleeking,  
With blood and mire was now a-reeking ;  
Of his two eyes of lustrous green,  
But one, alas ! could now be seen ;  
His whiskers had a look forlorn,  
Which erst his cheeks did so adorn,  
And his fine handsome swishing tail  
Was broken like a threshing flail.  
But when the King beheld his plight,  
Fierce flashed his eyes, with fire alight,  
Cursed he and swore with oaths most awful,  
That he'd not stay for process lawful,  
But Malperdy he would demolish,  
And foxes from the world abolish.  
Cried he, " By all this powerful realm,  
Of which 'tis mine to steer the helm,  
Ere twice the sun sinks 'neath the sea,  
No single fox alive shall be.  
I'll kill them old, I'll kill them young,  
I'll kill them weak, I'll kill them strong,  
And, by the everlasting rocks,  
The world shan't know the name of fox."  
But to the Cat kind words he gave,  
Bidding his wounds to tend and lave,  
And softly said, " Come hither, Tybert,  
Of our royal race thou kin and sib art,  
Of glass I'll give thee a new eye,  
And bid our barber-surgeon try  
If a new tail cannot be grown  
As long and handsome as our own."

X. Tybert's  
hard days.

X. Tybert's  
hard days. Then called he all his council grave,  
And said, "Shall this vile beast outbrave  
Our every law and ordinance,  
While we attendance on him dance,  
Sending first one and then another,  
Whilst we our indignation smother  
Against his most unblushing crimes,  
Worthy of death ten thousand times?  
Say ye then, what behoves us next  
To clear and end this question vext?"



XI · HOW · GRYMBERT · THE ·  
DACHS · SPAKE · AGAIN · FOR ·  
REYNARD ·

XI. Dachs'  
redes avail.

**T**HEN spake Sir Grymbert, who alone  
Stood by the Fox, his sister's son,  
And said, "Hear me, O noble lords,  
List to my most impartial words:  
Though that my ene were ten times shrew  
In all that he hath done to you,  
Yet is there a just remedy  
If ye will be but ruled thereby.  
'Tis true he hath been summoned twice,  
And first with honey, then with mice,  
He hath befooled the King's envoy,  
But if you should the Fox destroy  
Ye'd find the Court a dullish place,  
Seeing no more his keen quick face,

And I feel sure, if spoken fair,  
By some one who would act with care,  
He'd come and make all matters square.  
But should he a third time refuse,  
I'd rather not stand in his shoes,  
From his defence I should retire,  
Leaving him to destruction dire."  
The King cried, "Grymbert, speak out plain,  
Who would'st thou send to him again?  
Pray who is there will risk the chance  
Of eyes, ears, life, in such a dance?  
Lives there aught wight beneath my rule  
Who would be known for such a fool?"  
Then once more Grymbert spake and said:  
"Great King, I'll risk my ears and head;  
I've learned some things in Reynard's school,  
I'll go, though you should count me fool.  
Give me but now your royal command,  
And to the work I'll set my hand."

XI. Dachs'  
redes avail.

**G** O, Grymbert! go!" the King cried out,  
"I think ye know your way about,  
But be ye ware of Reynard's wiles,  
Have care, lest he his eme beguiles;  
He never spares nor eme nor friend,  
So he but compass his foul end."  
Quoth Grymbert with a twinkling eye,  
"Once bit, you know, will twice be shy."  
Forth went the Dachs then warily,  
Faring straight on towards Malperdy.

XI. Dachs' Arrived he knocked at Reynard's door,  
redes avail. Where knocked he had oft-times before,  
But made now such a monstrous din,  
That Reynard cried "Come in! come in!  
Who stands there making such a rout?  
Whatever is the noise about?"  
But when at last he saw the Dachs,  
Cried he, "My tongue just speechword lacks  
To tell you what delight and joy  
I have to see you here, my boy.  
And pray, how goes our Lord the King?  
Sit down and tell me everything;  
But see, there sits Dame Ermelyne,  
'Tis long since you your aunt have seen;  
You'll stay and dine? I've got a pie,  
Which is perhaps a little high,  
But only with a gamy savour  
Just strong enough to give it flavour."  
Quoth Grymbert, "Uncle, dine I can't,  
But let me just salute my aunt,  
And then we'll have some solemn talking,  
About the way in which you're walking.  
You see I must not matters mince,  
Ah! now I see I make you wince;  
Well, to speak truth, things do look badly,  
You really have behaved most sadly;  
Your treatment of the Cat and Bear,  
Has caused our noble King to swear,  
That if ye come not to the Court,  
And prove these accusations nought,

He will from off the land outroot thee,  
And all thy shifts no more shall boot thee.  
'Tis only from good fellowship  
That thy misdeeds thus bare I strip ;  
So pray be not thereat offended,  
But let your evil ways be mended.  
Wouldst thou avoid distress and sorrow,  
Come with me to the Court to-morrow ;  
Deny thou, and destruction quick  
Will rain upon thee sharp and thick ;  
Within three days will siege be laid  
To thy strong house, and well apaid  
Shall then be all thy grievous crimes ;  
Therefore, dear eme, be warned betimes.  
How dolorous for thy wife to see  
Her husband on the gallows-tree !  
Or to behold him on his back  
In all the tortures of the rack ;  
Think of thy wife and foxlings three  
Who in dire poverty would be,  
Or—must I say the dreadful word ?  
Perhaps be put to edge of sword.  
Forgive me then if I exhort  
You to come straightway to the Court,  
Where thou these charges mayst explain,  
And mercy from our good King gain.  
Although the case is heavy, yet  
I doubt not ye may pardon get ;  
For thy quick tongue and ready wit  
Will well avail with answer fit ;

XI. Dachs'  
redes avail.

XI. Dachs' And cleared of every foul complaint,  
redes avail. You'll walk away a perfect saint ;  
While those who thought your death to compass  
Will get into no end of rumpus.  
Full many a time in equal peril,  
When all resource seemed dry and sterile,  
I've known thee to hoodwink thy foes,  
Ever thy wit by danger grows."

Q UOTH Reynard, " Eme, ye speak the truth,  
Thy words I trow are words of sooth,  
I doubt me not 'twere well to go  
And bow me in submission low ;  
The King perchance will mercy feel,  
Unless his heart be made of steel ;  
If I can get but speech of him,  
I'll soften his intention grim.  
And after all, my sins are venial,  
To bait a bear is so congenial,  
That when I get a chance to do it,  
I can't resist, though I should rue it.  
And as to Tybert and the trap,  
What was it but a mere mishap ?  
The Court would be a sorry place  
If there they lacked old Reynard's face ;  
And politics without his aid  
Would march but poorly, I'm afraid ;  
That wots the King full heartily,  
And rightly setteth much by me.  
Therefore, though he had sworn great oaths,

And torn his hair, and rent his clothes,  
 Yet, Grymbert, I am very loth  
 To think he meant to keep that oath.  
 Ever you see, dear Grym, at Court  
 Wit is a thing runs rather short,  
 And when they need that precious gem  
 They come to me to find it them  
 In craft, or scheme, or stratagem.  
 To me, I well know, some of those  
 Who live at Court are bitter foes ;  
 And when alone, I often feel  
 As though I need have nerves of steel ;  
 Since in such jeopardy I stand  
 'Mid the great nobles of the land.  
 Then, nephew, be it as ye think,  
 The bitter cup I needs must drink.  
 This very day I'll go with ye,  
 Putting my life in jeopardy,  
 Which is far better, after all,  
 Than that my wife and children small  
 Should suffer all the cruel woe  
 That poverty and exile know ;  
 Rather than they should thus be lost  
 I'd be upon a dunghill tost.  
 Come then, good Grymbert, let's away ;  
 Pray heaven may guard us night and day ! ”  
 Then to his wife, with tearful eye,  
 “ Ermelyne,” quoth he, “ Good-bye, good-bye !  
 My feelings scarce will let me speak ;  
 'Tis folly thus to show so weak,

XI. Dachs'  
 redcs avail.

XI. Dachs' But none can know the strife internal  
redes avail. That tears to shreds my breast paternal.  
Tend well the children while I'm gone,  
And specially our eldest son,  
Dear Reynkyn, who, I fancy, rather  
Resembles his beloved father ;  
And should you your poor husband lose,  
He will stand in his vacant shoes ;  
And little Rosel, my belief  
Is that he'll make a fairish thief ;  
Already more of hens and cocks  
He's stolen than many an aged fox.  
'Twould be a source of deep vexation  
Not to complete his education.  
How tenderly I love you all,  
Whatever ills may me befall,  
Can ne'er be known by other than  
This broken-hearted gentleman."  
With heavy sighs his bosom heaves,  
And tears shower down like rain from eaves :  
" Farewell, dear wife, heaven give me grace  
Once more to see your well-loved face :  
But if I come to utter grief,  
Be sure you wed some skilful thief.  
No longer now Malperdy's halls  
Shall echo to my soft footfalls,  
I feel the case so much the harder,  
Leaving no plunder in the larder.  
Wife of my soul, give o'er your weeping,  
Heaven have you in its holy keeping."



XII · HOW · REYNARD · WAS ·  
SHRIVEN · ON · HIS · WAY ·  
TO · THE · COURT ·

**R**EYNARD, with Grymbert, took his road  
Forthwith towards the King's abode;  
And silent they some distance went,  
Each one on his own thoughts intent.  
But ere that they had paced a mile,  
Quoth Reynard, with a sickly smile,  
"I've been a-thinking, nephew mine,  
That I must not at fate repine,  
Yet hard it is to leave my wife,  
The dear sweet partner of my life.  
We scarcely ever have been parted,  
Don't wonder if I feel downhearted:  
Home to my conscience is it driven  
That I should forthright get me shriven.  
Think ye some priest doth hereby lurk  
Who'd do for me that holy work?  
'Tis well to be prepared in case  
I have the very worst to face,  
And he who's shriven of his sins  
A better chance of heaven wins.  
Seeing that here is ne'er a priest,  
I might confess to you at least,  
I deeply mourn my soul's pollution,  
And should be glad of absolution ;

XII. Rey-  
nard shrift  
prays.

XII. Reynard  
shrifs  
prays.

As you're my eme, 'tis consequential  
You won't be very penitential."  
Quoth Grymbert, "'Tis a serious matter,  
If you to me confession patter,  
You must give o'er your wicked stealing,  
Else 'tis no use your sins revealing."  
Quoth Reynard, "That I know right well,  
That's why I wish my sins to tell,  
And so '*Confiteor tibi pater*,'  
That's all I know, but somewhat later,  
Now that I've made a good beginning,  
And feel as though I'd done with sinning,  
To learn '*Confiteor*' through I'll try,  
And say the whole thing by-and-by."  
Quoth Grymbert, "Since your Latin's weak,  
In English perhaps you'd better speak.  
'Tis so long since I went to school,  
My Latin has got rather cool."  
"Well then," quoth Reynard, "hear at once,  
(I'm sorry you are such a dunce)  
I own, to cut the matter short,  
I've trespassed, just by way of sport,  
Against all beasts who roam the woods,  
Have cheated them, and stolen their goods,  
And three especially I own  
May claim with me to pick a bone.  
First, then, there is my cousin Bruin,  
Whom I left his own juice to stew in;  
If he to steal the honey chose,  
And got a sanguinary nose,

Well, what had that to do with me?  
You're looking doubtfully, I see,  
You think that mess I got him in?  
Well, then, we'll reckon that one sin.  
Then set I Tybert to catch mice,  
Who found himself in half a trice  
Held fast by a great ugly gryn;  
Well, reckon that the second sin.  
Against the Cock, poor Chanticlere,—  
Well, that *is* a bad case, I fear;  
I carried off his children eight,  
And them with all their feathers ate;  
But 'twas a sort of reparation  
To save him all their education.  
Alas! against our King and Queen,  
My trespasses have serious been.  
The King I once said was a fool,  
But that was when I was at school,  
My worst crime was I told the truth;  
That folly I gave o'er with youth.  
The Queen, too, hates me for my tongue,  
Because I said she's no more young;  
I own that was a dreadful crime,  
And won't, alas! be cured by time.  
Then Isegrym the Wolf declares  
That evil at my hands he fares.  
I called him 'eme' to take him in,  
For he is nothing of my kin.  
Within a cloister him I sunk  
At Eelmare, making him a monk,

XII. Reynard shrift  
prays.

XII. Reynard shrift  
prays.

And then a monk myself turned I  
Just for to keep him company,  
But little good had he thereby.  
So loved he ringing of the bell,  
That asked he me the way to tell,  
How he might ring it for himself,  
And therefore promised me great pelf;  
So to the rope his feet I bound  
That he might ring a merry round.  
Rang he so lustily and long,  
That folk came running in a throng,  
Wondering what meant this mighty ringing,  
And feared the steeple down 'twas bringing:  
But when they found 'twas Isegrym  
Most soundly they all pummelled him,  
While down along the street I went  
Splitting my sides with merriment.

**T**HEN would he know how fish to catch,  
So by the stream I made him watch,  
And just as a big dragon fly  
Was huzzing-buzzing in his eye,  
I, with a sly push, sent him in,—  
To wash him surely was no sin.  
Also I led him to the house  
Of the rich priest at Vermedos,  
Where many a fitch of bacon hung,  
Whereon I'd tickled oft my tongue.  
Right through the wall I made a hole,  
Where in and out I freely stole;

You see my figure's neat and slim,  
Not like that lumbering Isegrym :  
But he just managed to get through,  
And there he had a rare set to ;  
So much he ate of beef and bacon,  
As e'en *my* wonder to awaken,  
But when he thought to come away,  
'Twas quite another time of day.  
You see when first he entered in,  
Empty he was, and lank and thin,  
But when with bacon and good beef  
He'd filled his maw beyond belief,  
He was so round, and big, and stout,  
No manner way could he get out.  
Then all the village, men and boys,  
I raised with halloo, shout and noise,  
And came they running all together,  
Like swarming bees in sultry weather.  
Meantime I ran to where the priest  
Had just sat down to mid-day feast,  
And he had got, as I'm a sinner,  
A fine fat capon to his dinner.  
The capon I laid paw upon,  
Ere he therefrom a scrap had won,  
And off I went, he following after,  
Though I could scarcely run for laughter,  
For as he shouts, ' Hi ! stop the Fox ! '  
His nose against the door he knocks  
With such a blow as made him blind,  
And left him very far behind.

XII. Reynard shrift  
prays.

XII. Reynard shrift  
prays.

Then at me cast he a big knife,  
Crying, ' Ne'er saw I in my life  
So barefaced, impudent a thief,  
To kill him were a great relief  
To all around this neighbourhood,  
His slaying holy were and good.  
Whoever first shall break his shins  
Shall have quick shrift of all his sins :.  
And he shall follow his own bent  
In eating flesh-meat all through Lent  
Who of his head and brush-tail docks  
That thieving villain, Reynard Fox.'  
So reached I to where Isegrym  
Stood trembling in his every limb,  
Now struggling to repass the hole  
Wherethrough so easily he stole  
Before he gorged on beef and bacon,  
And was with stoutness overtaken,  
Now crouching down in fear and terror,  
As he grew conscious of his error.  
The capon found I rather heavy,  
Which from the priest I late made levy,  
So, though much loth, I dropped my plunder,  
Which the Wolf saw with fear and wonder ;  
And then came bursting through the door  
His reverence and a dozen more ;  
But wishing to avoid this rout,  
As they rushed in, so I popped out  
Through the convenient little hole  
Whereby I did the Wolf cajole.

Then did the priest with marvel stare,  
 When the Wolf saw he glaring there;  
 Cried he, 'the Fox 'twas stole my capon,  
 But here he has another shape on.  
 The Fox it was in my belief,  
 But here we plunder find with thief;  
 Smite at him, then, through thick and thin,  
 Leave no whole bone beneath his skin.  
 We'll teach these robbing, plundering knaves  
 The merry use of stocks and staves.'  
 So all the crew with sticks and stones  
 Well pounded his poor head and bones,  
 And each blow fell with aim unerring,  
 Till he seemed dead as high dried herring.  
 Then threw they him into a ditch,  
 And set above him this distich:  
 'Here lies the Fox that stole the capon,  
 And then was found with wolfish shape on.'  
 He got up whole and sound as ever,  
 But how it happened wist I never.

XII. Reynard  
 shrift  
 prays.

**T**HEN led I him another dance,  
 By showing him a wondrous chance  
 Of hens and roosters, fine and fat,  
 That on a perch together sat.  
 'Now Isegrym,' quoth I, 'behold  
 A chance that is as good as gold;  
 Food shall ye have to make ye crazy,  
 If that ye be not dull and lazy.  
 Now climb ye up by this trap-door,

XII. Reynard  
shrift  
prays.

As many a time I've done before,  
And there such provender ye'll find,  
Will gladden and o'erjoy your mind.'  
Then jovially he growled and grinned,  
For to my words full faith he pinned ;  
And in he crept and snuffed about,  
But could nor cock nor hens make out.  
'Go farther in,' quoth I ; quoth he,  
'Reynard, ye poke your fun at me.'  
'Nay,' quoth I, 'creep along the perch,'  
And so I had him in the lurch,  
For down went Wolf and perch a-tumbling,  
Making a most unearthly rumbling,  
So that the folks, who'd been asleep,  
Out from their beds did skip and leap,  
Shouting, 'The trap-door is ajar,  
Who is it hath undone the bar ?'  
Who it was, no one ever said,  
Because it ne'er was fastened ;  
But when at last they got a light,  
They all set on the Wolf to amite,  
And never deemed I he'd contrive  
To get from out their hands alive.  
Grymbert, should I tell all the fun  
That I with Isægrym have done,  
You'd send forth merry peals of laughter,  
Enough to shake a roof-tree's rafter.  
But stay, I'm making a digression,  
Forgetting that I'm in confession ;  
But, nephew dear, I have my fears

That I should shock your upright ears  
Should I tell all the funny crimes  
That I've done in the good old times;  
A many have I clean forgot,  
And so I can confess them not;  
And others I could scarce remember,  
Though I thought now until December;  
So let me hear what penance you  
Consider meet for me to do  
For such crimes as to you I've told,  
Done in the merry days of old.  
No man in all the world e'er meant  
To be more truly penitent  
Than does your eme, whose bitter grief  
Is that he e'er became a thief;  
And much he hopes his heartfelt sorrow  
Will last at least until to-morrow."

XII. Reynard  
shrift  
prays.

**G**RYMBERT, who subtle was and wise,  
A brand new penance did devise:  
He halted 'neath a spreading oak,  
And a slim twig therefrom he broke;  
Then said, "Dear Reynard, list to me,  
Your body with this twig must be  
Smitten three times, then on the ground  
Lay it ye must, and o'er it bound  
Three times, but with your legs unbent,  
And with your eyes on heaven intent.  
But if ye hesitate or stumble,  
Then that will show ye are not humble.

XII. Reynard shrift  
prays.

Then finally the twig uptake,  
If ye your peace with heaven will make,  
And kiss the rod with air devotional,  
Well, there, don't cry, you're too emotional.  
Being now of your ill life quit,  
From this day forth pray better it ;  
Comfort your soul with holy balms,  
And pass your time in singing psalms ;  
To church go ye three times a day,  
And ne'er forget to fast and pray ;  
Give alms and keep church feast days holy,  
Let all your ways be meek and lowly ;  
Give over all your theft and treason,  
So have ye hope of heaven with reason."  
Quoth Reynard, " I'll strive all I can  
To be henceforth another man,  
And now that I am duly shriven,  
I trust I'm well prepared for heaven."  
So wended they towards the Court,  
Grymbert delighted at the thought  
That thus at last before the King,  
He, Reynard quite reformed, should bring ;  
But the Fox led him all astray  
From the broad path and beaten way,  
Till passed they close beside a cloister,  
Where black nuns said their Paternoster.  
There hens and capons, and white geese,  
Strolled all around the walls in peace,  
Or, in the bright sunshiny weather,  
Sprawled themselves on the sward together,

Of safeguard and protection heedless,  
And deeming all precaution needless.  
As Grymbert mounted o'er a stile,  
Reynard hung back a little while,  
And seeing a young cockerel, who  
Strutted apart and gaily crew,  
Snapped at him, making feathers fly  
Into the air full three feet high :  
And when he saw that he'd escaped,  
He cried, "Dear Grym, I only japed."  
Cried Grymbert, "Ah! vile man, will ye  
Thus once again accursed be,  
Whom but this moment I have shriven,  
Making ye fit for highest heaven?  
Will ye thus, for a joy infernal,  
Risk that ye go to fire infernal?"  
Quoth Reynard, "Truly I forgot,  
Pray for me that I suffer not;  
It was indeed an act of folly,  
But cockerels, see you, are so jolly,  
And nought you know, but snaps and snips,  
For three long days has passed my lips;  
Yet, as I promised you before,  
I really will do so no more."  
Yet still he looked with lickorish eye  
On all the fowls that passed him by;  
For "What's bred in the bone, afresh  
Will ever break forth in the flesh."  
Though to be hanged should be his meed,  
Reynard could scarce restrain his greed;

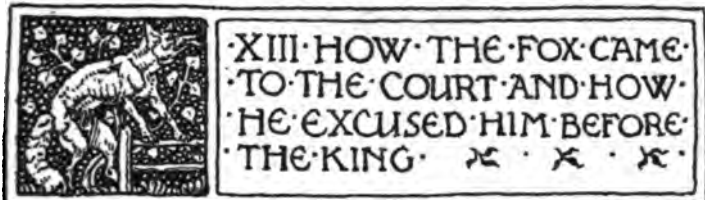
XII. Reynard shrift  
prays.

XII. Reynard  
shrifs  
prays.

But first on left, and then on right,  
He watched each bird that came in sight.

**T**HIS Grymbert notes and cries in scorn,  
"Basest deceiver ever born,  
Still wilt thou from right deviate,  
And rush on thy deserved fate?"  
Quoth Reynard, "Cousin, ye misdo,  
Such speech but ill becometh you;  
Ye draw me from my meditation,  
Wherein I'm seeking my salvation;  
I did but say a Paternoster,  
Beseeching gracious heaven to foster  
The souls of all those hens and geese  
To which from earth I've given release;  
Many belonged to these black nuns,  
And therefore must be holy ones.  
If they're in heaven, I ask you then,  
What worse did I than clergymen  
Who, week throughout, the whole days seven,  
Are striving to send souls to heaven?"  
Small faith put Grymbert in these words,  
Knowing the Fox loved well fat birds,  
But felt 'twould be but idle chatter,  
With Reynard to discuss the matter,  
So trotted on without retort  
Till that they neared the Royal Court.  
Then began Reynard's heart to quake,  
Felt he his legs beneath him shake,  
For now must he give satisfaction

For all his grievous malefaction,  
Or else before his eyes doth loom  
The horrors of a felon's doom.



**T**HROUGHOUT the Court the news soon spread  
XIII. Reynard at Court.

That Reynard came, by Grymbert led;  
And how it was that Grym's persuasion  
Had him availed on this occasion,  
Was canvassed o'er and o'er again,  
By man and woman, maid and swain,  
And Reynard's crimes were finely handled;  
Well he and Ermelyne were scandalled,  
For men find aye a wondrous pleasure  
Their fellow men's misdeeds to measure,  
And feel a sort of jocund woe  
In talking o'er "poor so and so."  
Thus every man within the state,  
Or rich or poor, or small or great,  
Ill found of friends or strong of kin,  
Or tall, or short, or thick, or thin,  
The man with foulest sins attaint,  
Or he who passed for purest saint,  
They one and all, without exception,  
To Reynard gave a warm reception;

XIII. Reynard at Court.

Recounting all the sins he'd done,  
From early dawn till set of sun.  
Then Reynard looked as bold as brass,  
Holding him better than he was;  
Proudly he through the high-street walked,  
And with his nephew joked and talked,  
With careless, jovial manner, strutting,  
His old acquaintance, lordlike, cutting,  
As he'd declare with ostentation,  
"Behold the lord of all creation ;"  
And just as though of trespass he  
Was clear as newborn babe could be.

**S**O reached he to the deeming place  
With virtue written in his face,  
And standing there before the King,  
Cried with loud voice, "May sorrow's sting  
Fall now on my devoted pate  
Unless I me exonerate  
Of all the crimes and murders foul  
Which villains charge against my soul.  
To thee I cry, O mighty Lord,  
That truth and justice thou accord  
To me who always loved thee well,  
Ay! better than my tongue can tell.  
Listen not, monarch of the woods,  
To all the false unlikelihooods  
Whereby my unrelenting foes  
Would cast me in death's bitter throes.  
Through the wide world there breathes no man,

Whatso may be his tribe or clan,  
 Who'd stand with thee 'gainst Fortune's shocks  
 Like thy tried friend, old Reynard Fox.  
 Who say I'm false, with words unsightly,  
 Deceivers are, and liars lightly.  
 'Tis sad indeed that in these days  
 Such folk in Courts have meed and praise,  
 As trample and bear true men down  
 To the dishonour of thy crown :  
 May heaven give them their due reward,  
 And grant thee health, great King and Lord ! ”  
 Flashed the King's eyes with scorn and ire :  
 “ Reynard,” he cried, “ our soul doth tire  
 Of thy gross crimes and wickednesses,  
 Thy way of life the world distresses ;  
 Thy lies avail thee not one straw,  
 I know no course but course of law.  
 Think'st thou, with thy vile flattering tongue,  
 The King to rank thy friends among,  
 Who hath no ear but ear for justice,  
 And to do right whose care and lust is ?  
 Ye broke the peace that I commanded,  
 And justice shall be evenhanded.”  
 Then Chanticleer no more could hold  
 His tongue, but cried with accents bold,  
 “ Great King, consider what I've lost,  
 And what to me this thief hath cost.”

XIII. Rey-  
 nard at  
 Court.

XIII. Reynard at Court.

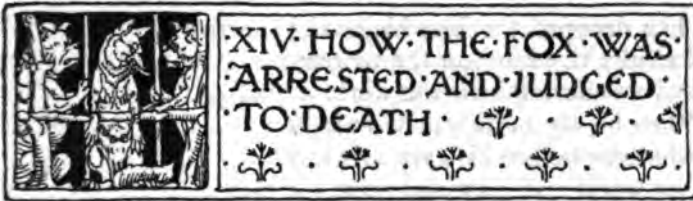
**P**EACE, Chanticleer, and still thy tongue,  
Avail not I to right thy wrong?"  
Exclaimed the King, "The world I'll rid  
Of this foul thief ere once more hid  
Are the sun's rays behind yon hill,  
Or with fresh crimes the world he'll fill.  
So, traitor vile and robber fell,  
Thou'dst have me deem ye love me well!  
Yea! how this love thou hast shown forth,  
Is known East, West, and South, and North;  
And dar'st thou thus, thou sorry knave,  
Our messengers and friends to brave?  
Nor only so, but them to treat  
With injuries and wrongs unmeet?  
Tybert the Cat, thy friend and eme,  
Who hath our love and high esteem,  
Much grief hath suffered at thy hands,  
Bearing to thee our royal commands;  
And Bruin Bear, who worthily  
Was our ambassador to thee,  
Thou didst beguile in cruel sort,  
With spiteful jest and wanton sport,  
Through honey sweets imaginary  
Making his head all sanguinary.  
Such deeds ye may account but lightly,  
But death for them shall grip thee tightly."  
"By all that's holy," cried the Fox,  
"I fear nor bears, nor cats, nor cocks,  
But pray, great King, ye'll judge my cause  
By thy most just and equal laws.

Tell me, I prithee, how could I  
 Hinder friend Bruin's gluttony?  
 Had he not Lantfert's honey eaten,  
 I trow he never had been beaten,  
 And to a beast so stout and strong  
 No man had dared to do a wrong  
 Had he been bold as he was froward,  
 And had not shewn himself a coward.

XIII. Reynard at  
 Court.

**A**ND then when you did Tybert send,  
 Did I not treat him as a friend,  
 Offering the best in all my house?  
 Yet he forsooth must feast on mouse,  
 And needs must go to rob the priest,  
 Now was that my fault in the least?  
 Had he my frugal supper shared,  
 Ne'er had he in the gryn been snared.  
 My Lord, 'tis grievously unkind,  
 But I am to my fate resigned,  
 Take and do with me what you will,  
 Roast, hang, or blind, or outright kill,  
 Grim death I may not now escape,  
 Yet fear him not in any shape.  
 Beneath your power, great King, I lie,  
 And by your deeming must aby;e;  
 The people are but stones and stocks  
 If they mourn not poor Reynard Fox."  
 As ended he, cried Bellyn Ram,  
 (Ne'er finer sheep was dropped by dam,)  
 And with him spake good dame Olwey,

XIII. Reynard at Court. (His faithful ewe for many a day,)  
"Hear us, great Lord, hear our just plaint,  
We all this felon Fox attaint,  
With us are joined good Bruin Bear,  
And all his kinfolk gathered there,  
Tybert the Cat, and Iægrym,  
Who suffered cruelly through him,  
Cuwaert the Hare, with throat yet sore,  
And Panther your most faithful Boar,  
The Camel too plains sad abuse,  
And Brunel your most watchful Goose,  
The Kid and Goat their grievance tell,  
Baldwin the patient Ass as well,  
Borrè the Bull, whom once he baited,  
Hamel the Ox, to him related,  
The Weasel e'en doth grievance show,  
And Chanticleer, 'as well ye know  
Mourns for Dame Coppen his dear wife,  
Who by base Reynard lost her life."  
Then with raised voice this motley crowd  
Shouted their grievances aloud,  
Demanding that their Lord and King  
Reynard to judgment swift should bring.



XIV. Reynard's arrest.

**S**O summoned was a parliament,  
 Whither all beasts their envoys sent,  
 And where, amid the strife of tongues,  
 He most was heard who had best lungs.  
 Now though one might have thought with reason  
 That none could doubt the Fox's treason,  
 Yet were there heard some counter cries,  
 Most subtly and perversely wise.  
 Then did the wily Fox excuse  
 Each evil deed and crafty ruse,  
 Till many 'gan to doubt and wonder  
 If some mistake they laboured under,  
 And if the case were fairly tried,  
 The Fox perchance might be belied;  
 But when the witnesses were heard,  
 Dire wrath once more the King's heart stirred,  
 And through the hall the sentence rang,  
 "Guilty the Fox is, let him hang  
 By his false neck until he's dead,  
 But let him not be buried,  
 Or o'er his corse have funeral rites,  
 With solemn dirge and waxen lights,  
 But bound in chains hang up on high,  
 A warning to all passers by."

XIV. Rey- Then drooped the Fox his head in sorrow,  
nard's arrest. Ruefully thinking on the morrow,  
And wondering how the world would go  
When his sly head was laid alow.  
All seems before his eyes to swim,  
The world's all past and gone for him.

' **M** ID all the crimes that heap disgrace  
On what is called "our fallen race,"  
There's a bright spot one oft may mark  
That gives relief where most is dark.  
It is, that scarcely lives a creature,  
However blurred each moral feature,  
However grossly stained with crime,  
But finds, at trouble's darkest time,  
Some friend who still with fondness clings,  
And light, and hope, and comfort brings,  
And this one fact, as it meseems,  
Man's baleful nature much redeems.  
So now, when Reynard's deepest trouble  
Seemed nigh towards bursting life's brief bubble,  
When he seemed plunged in such black scorn  
As made him wish he'd ne'er been born,  
No man can say a friend he lacks  
While Grymbert lives, the faithful Dachs.  
He, and some others of his race,  
Say their farewells with rueful face,  
And sore oppressed, with dire distress,  
Think of the morrow's woefulness.  
The King marked how some younglings went,

With tearful eyes and heads low bent,  
And speaking with himself, quoth he,  
"Needs it to note how this may be,  
Reynard lacks not for friends, 'tis clear,  
And to his kinsmen seems he dear ;  
A scoundrel who hath many friends  
May yet in some way serve our ends."  
But while he with himself thus talked,  
Others there were who'd not be balked.  
Tybert the Cat cried, "Why thus slow ?  
Our painful duty well we know,  
Which is at once to hang the Fox,  
Death's safer far than bolts or locks.  
Sir Bruin, and Sir Isegrym,  
Ye both be strong and stout of limb,  
See here on hedge, or bush, or tree,  
Full lightly hoist him up may ye,  
And though I see no rope about,  
Such lack must not put justice out,  
For ere that justice lags or fails,  
Let us together join our tails,  
The three tails spliced, I have good hope,  
Would make a strong and sturdy rope,  
And all the world would think it nice  
That we made such a sacrifice ;  
For 'twill be widely understood  
'Twas only for the public good,  
And though some ridicule I win,  
I'd lose my tail to save my skin.  
But haste ! let us the gallows dight,

XIV. Rey-  
nard's arrest.

XIV. Rey- Or Reynard won't be hanged to-night,  
 nard's arrest. And truly doth the proverb say,  
 'Fast bind, and then fast find ye may.'

**I**SEGRYM sighed; quoth he, "Dear Tyb,  
 I don't like hanging our old sib."  
 "What!" cried the Cat, "ye be afeard?  
 Who was it then that did ye beard,  
 When ye had eaten the priest's store  
 And got ye wellnigh killed therefore?  
 And who, I pray, gave counsel plain  
 By which were hanged your brethren twain?  
 Although our duty mayn't be pleasant,  
 Mark me! there's no time like the present."



XV. HOW THE FOX WAS  
 LED TO THE GALLOWS  
 · ☉ · ☉ · ☉ · ☉ ·

XV. Fox  
 days seem  
 short.

**S**TILL Isegrim would stand and palter,  
 Quoth he, "Dear Tyb, we've got no halter,  
 And as to your device of queues,  
 I must therefrom myself excuse;  
 You see I never could stand chaffing,  
 Nor bear to see the public laughing."  
 Quoth Reynard then, who stood hard by  
 With downcast look and tearful eye,  
 "I own that I deserve my fate,  
 And justice would accelerate,

My own crime doth the means afford  
 Of hanging me, for see the cord,  
 Strong and well knit, although 'tis thin,  
 That Tybert brought from out the gryn,  
 And which hangs still about his neck,  
 That well will serve my life to check.  
 Swiftly and well can Tybert climb,  
 And hark! I hear the death-bell chime;  
 Mount, Tybert, mount the gallows tree,  
 Alack! alack! all's o'er with me.  
 Yet Isegrym, and Bruin too,  
 I'd just have one last word with you:  
 Ask yourselves, is it just and meet  
 That your poor nephew thus ye treat,  
 Because with you he had some fun?  
 And after all, what harm was done?  
 There stand ye safe and sound as rocks,  
 While death stares at poor Reynard Fox.  
 Haste then your evil work to do,  
 Remember, ye unholy two,  
 Grim death, one day, will stare at you."  
 Quoth Bruin, as a fly he flicked  
 From off his nose, "Don't contradict,  
 Dear Isegrym, our dying friend,  
 'Tis well he's making a good end.  
 Now that he's really penitent,  
 At once let him to heaven be sent,  
 And perhaps when there he shows his face  
 They'll send him to—another place."

XV. Fox  
 days seem  
 short.

XV. Fox  
days seem  
short.

**W**HILE all this conversation passed,  
Four stout dogs held sly Reynard fast;  
Two held his ears and two his tail,  
Lest he perchance should give leg bail.  
Chance of escape, he saw, was slim,  
Yet once more hope awoke in him;  
For though in words he was resigned,  
No thought was farther from his mind  
Than to be hanged, if he saw how  
Kind fate would his escape allow.  
Quoth he, "Dear Isegrym, 'tis pain,  
I'm sure, to you, and 'gainst the grain,  
That you should do me hurt and scathe;  
Hereafter, scalding tears will bathe  
Your manly cheeks whene'er you think  
What bitter cup you made me drink;  
You're not hardhearted, and you can't  
Be willing to distress my aunt,  
Who sweetly must remember yet  
The time when she would call me 'pet,'  
And how a lamb I 'brought' her whole,  
Perhaps some folks would call it 'stole.'  
If now she saw my sorrow deep,  
I'm sure the dear good soul would weep.  
Ah! Bruin Bear, ah! Tybert Cat,  
Some day, you may get tit for tat,  
Heaven will your cruelty requite,  
For that ye grudge me short respite  
While I explain the situation  
And satisfy your indignation.

Well, I will like a hero die,  
 No tear-drop shall bedew my eye,  
 And I should feel resigned the rather,  
 For that my venerated father,  
 When he was threatened with like fate,  
 Said to me, 'Well, at any rate,  
 My cruel foes I have forgiven,  
 And trust we all shall meet in heaven.'  
 So I forgive all those who now  
 Such evil spite against me show."  
 Said Isegrym, "We've heard enough  
 This hypocrite's palavering stuff;  
 Bruin, walk you on the left side,  
 While I upon the right abide,  
 And, Tybert, thou shalt bear the cord,  
 So march we straightway gallows-ward."

XV. Fox  
 days seem  
 short.

**R**AN Tybert forward with good will,  
 Not loth was he the Fox to kill,  
 For from the very cord he bore  
 His throat was smarting still and sore.  
 Right joyfully he handled it,  
 Thinking therewith the Fox to quit.  
 He might be of his kith and kin,  
 But he 'twas got him in the gryn.  
 So marched they on in long procession,  
 Making a solemn slow progression  
 To where the Fox must meet his fate,  
 And his transgressions expiate.  
 Nobel the King and his fair Queen,

XV. Fox  
days seem  
short.

With courtiers plenty there were seen,  
Not one in all the Court refused,  
Or begged the sight to be excused.  
Rank, and wit, and wealth, and beauty,  
All deemed it a most solemn duty  
To follow this lugubrious function  
As though 'twere to their souls sweet unction.  
Reynard hears now the death-bell's boom,  
Filling his soul with dread and gloom,  
And as his eyes the gallows met,  
Burst on his brow a death-cold sweat.  
Yet still he cast up in his mind,  
If he perchance some means might find  
To give the devil one more slip,  
And have his foes upon the hip.  
Thought he, " If I can get the King  
To hearken to my fair saying,  
Then may I cause him to forget  
All crimes that I have done as yet.  
If I can work his foolish heart  
To think he may through me have part  
In that for which men oft have sold  
Themselves and friends, unheard of gold,  
Then will he pardon me once more,  
And trust me freely as before.  
It surely seems a little odd  
That men should make a perfect god  
Of that which only brings them care,  
And doth not serve to eat or wear ;  
But as it really seems a fact,

That every thought and every act  
Of man is ruled by this bright stuff,  
Well, that for me is quite enough.  
The King and all his council too,  
May be much wise, yet not see through  
The subtlety of my invention,  
Nor fathom quite my deep intention.  
Once more sleek Reynard may go free,  
And all his foes confounded be,  
Or deck perhaps the gallows-tree.”  
Quoth Isegrym, as on they walked,  
“Bruin, beware lest ye be balked  
Of the revenge that well ye owe  
To one who hath deceived ye so.  
Just now I wavered, but in truth  
’Twas but a momentary ruth;  
Bethink ye of the rosy crown  
Ye wear in place of furry brown,  
And how that rosy crown ye caught  
Through rede to ye by Reynard taught.  
Now Tybert, up the gallows go,  
To make a slip knot well ye know,  
And bind the cord tight, hard and fast,  
So Reynard shall be hanged at last.  
Now, Bruin, see him held, while I  
Set up the ladder steadily.”  
Quoth Bruin, “Trust to me for help  
To rid us of the ugly whelp,  
And when he swings, then will we three  
Dance, hands joined, round the gallows tree,

XV. Fox  
days seem  
short.

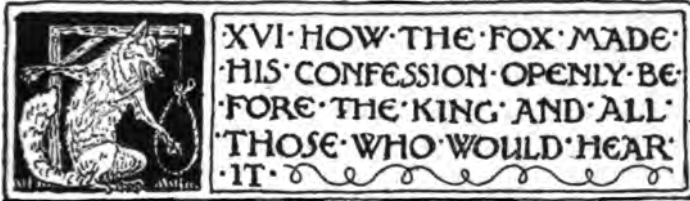
XV. For  
days seem  
short.

Singing a roundel merrily."  
Quoth Reynard, "Yes, they're wondrous clever,  
Your chance, dear boy, is now or never,  
Ye must not let your wits go sleeping,  
Nor waste your precious time in weeping.  
The King I may bring round to me  
By raising his cupidity,  
For sure no other human passion  
Remains so constantly in fashion.  
But first methinks I'll play the humble,  
And thus may give my foes a tumble."

**T**HEN putting on a rueful mien,  
He cried, "Most noble King and Queen,  
The world must close upon me soon,  
But ere that haps, I ask one boon.  
It is, that as I've understood  
Confession for the soul is good,  
Which being thereby disencumbered,  
Is fit to be with blessed ones numbered,  
I now may make a free confession  
Of every great or small transgression  
That I have done 'gainst any man  
Since first my sinful life began;  
So shall my soul be quit and easy  
Of crimes whereof I've not been queasy;  
And owning all that I have done,  
No other man beneath the sun  
Can be accused or suffer blame  
Of things acknowledged to my shame.

Pray for me then, good people all,  
 And warned be ye by Reynard's fall.  
 E'en as my body swings on high  
 With my last breath aloud I'll cry,  
 'God save our gracious Lord the King,  
 And on his foes confusion bring.'"

XV. Fox  
 days seem  
 short.



**T**HIS speechword seemed all folks to touch,  
 And the crowd murmured, "'Tis not much  
 Reynard demands ere death he taste,  
 Besides, of time 'twould not be waste  
 To hear the story quite unusual,  
 How he with tricks did folks bamfoozle.  
 Perhaps 'twould shock our finer senses  
 To hear all his experiences,  
 But then 'twould most amusing be,  
 And we all suffer with ennui."  
 With small ado agreed the King  
 To hearken to this murmuring,  
 For much he longed to hear the story  
 How Reynard had in crime grown hoary.  
 Quoth he, "'Twill teach me skill and tact  
 To hear his crimes." But the plain fact  
 Was that their unmatched tortuosity  
 Quite piqued his ingrained curiosity,

XVI. Old  
 sins con-  
 fessed.

XVI. Old  
sins con-  
fessed.

And thus to reason fixed he handle  
For listening to a pleasant scandal :  
So 'twas agreed that Reynard should  
Confess his sins e'en as he would.  
Thought he, "Then here is one chance more,  
And I'll hoodwink them as before."  
So forthwith, free from blush of shame,  
He called upon a holy name  
To be his guide and help and friend  
To compass his unholy end ;  
'Twas very wrong, but then you see  
He sinned in fairish company,  
For is it not a thing delectable  
To thousands who are "quite respectable"  
To cover moral deviation  
By some most sacred invocation ?  
Then looked he round and saw scarce one  
'Gainst whom some crime he had not done ;  
Quoth he, high-voiced, "It seemeth strange  
What 'twas that did my being change,  
For though I always have been clever,  
Till I was weaned, there sure was never  
Into this world a creature sent  
More sweet, or pure, or innocent.  
Ah ! me, yes, well do I remember  
How in that mild and warm December  
I first to youthful joys awoke,  
Life seemed to me all fun and joke,  
I with the new-born lambkins played,  
And with them frisked, they nought afraid,

Till as it happened, just by chance,  
My teeth a lamb's soft skin did lance,  
And I the first time tasted blood,  
Oh ! but 'twas lickorish and good,  
And once the taste of flesh I'd got  
Forthwith, no other food I wot,  
Was by me reckoned worth a gnat,  
I longed for nothing else but that.  
So loved I lamb or tender kid,  
That innocence adieu I bid,  
And where'er heard I kiddlings bleat,  
There sought I of my favourite meat.  
Then soon I bold and hardy waxed,  
And heavily the temper taxed  
Of all the henwives round the steads,  
For, while they pressed their downy beds,  
Their stock of ducks and hens and geese  
Did in a wondrous way decrease,  
And soon became it my delight  
To kill no more for appetite,  
But simply for the joy of slaughter  
I spilt their blood like so much water.  
So found I one day Isegrym,  
Who cosily was sheltering him,  
From winter's wrath, within a hole  
Formed in a monarch oak-tree's bole.  
Quoth he to me, ' I am thy eme ; '  
Quoth I, ' That doth me well beseem ;  
Suppose we swear eternal friendship,  
We may a cargo in the end ship

XVI. Old  
sins con-  
fessed.

XVI. Old  
sins con-  
fessed.

Of plunder, for betwixt us twain  
Such talent is, as scarce again  
You could throughout the wild woods meet,  
What others could with us compete?  
Since thou art fierce, and I am cunning,  
Betwixt us we might make good running.  
We two should never want a meal,  
For while you raven I can steal,  
While you make wholesale spoliations,  
I can do minor depredations.  
But see you as things went along,  
I was but weak, while he was strong,  
And so it happed that ever he  
Took much more than his moiety.  
Did I a tender lambkin steal,  
He took the whole down at a meal.  
When he a wether got, or calf,  
Instead of giving me my half  
He'd grin at me with angry stare,  
And say, 'Well, take it—if you dare.'  
And when we stole an ox or cow,  
He'd cry, 'Now, Reynard, tell me how,  
If you should share alike with me,  
Can I support my family?  
When Ersewyn feels a hungry maw,  
Her appetite forgets all law,  
It takes more food to keep alive  
Two wolves than any foxes five.'  
So got I nought but small rib bones,  
About as nourishing as stones,

From which he'd gnawed the skin and gristle  
 As bare and clean as any whistle;  
 But therewith must I be content,  
 Though I with hunger should be spent.  
 But I, thank heaven, grew independent,  
 Finding a treasure most resplendent,  
 Bright gold and silver, gems and pearls,  
 Such as nor kings, nor lords, nor earls,  
 Did ever in their lives behold;  
 Ne'er hath its wondrous worth been told,  
 Nor ever shall be now that I  
 Must as a malefactor die,  
 But whosoe'er that treasure gains  
 Might fill with it seven monstrous wains.  
 If now to hang me be your pleasure,  
 So must remain that precious treasure  
 (Enough to fill a spacious room)  
 Hidden and lost till crack of doom."

XVI. Old  
 sins con-  
 fessed.



XVII. HOW THE FOX COZENED  
 THE KING; PERSUADING HIM  
 THAT THE WOLF & THE BEAR  
 WERE HIS FOES, & HOW HE GAT  
 THE GRACE OF THE KING.

**T**O this fine tale King Nobel listened,  
 And at its ending brightly glistened  
 His eyes, which lately shot with fire,  
 While hotly he destruction dire  
 Had threatened 'gainst the Fox's kin.  
 Another mood he now was in,

XVII. The  
 Fox well  
 goes.

XVII. The For in a moment seized was he  
Fox well By the foul fiend cupidity,  
goes. And through his brain bright visions floated,  
Whilst his imagination gloated  
On the great heaps of gold and treasure,  
Whence he might draw at will and pleasure :  
And his late stern unbending air,  
Changed to expression bland and fair.  
Quoth he, " Dear Reynard, tell me truly,  
And ye shall be rewarded duly,  
Where may this treasure then be found,  
Or is it buried 'neath the ground,  
Or in some ancient cavern stored,  
Where gnomes and genii guard the hoard ?  
Tell us, and ye shall gain your life,  
Nor only that, but freed from strife,  
Honours on you we will confer,  
Making thee our Prime Minister ;  
So wilt thou into grandeur rise,  
And triumph o'er thine enemies."  
Quoth Reynard, " Oh ! my Lord and King,  
Great sorrow have I of this thing,  
For so to you must I reveal  
How others did that treasure steal,  
Serving their wicked selfish ends,  
While boasting them your closest friends.  
That I thereto gave feigned assent  
Was to my own great detriment,  
And, gracious Lord, to your salvation,  
For, own I it with perturbation,

Had I not at this pillage winked,  
 And, so to speak, therewith been linked,  
 So that I might it now betray,  
 And make it all as clear as day,  
 Thou then, great King, should'st now be dead,  
 With the Queen murdered in thy bed  
 By foul conspirators, who fain  
 Would o'er thy kingdom rule and reign."  
 Then shrieked the Queen, "Ah, wel-a-way!  
 What is this, Reynard, that ye say?  
 Are there then those would pull us down  
 From our great royalty and crown?  
 Prithee, good Reynard, make all plain,  
 And thou shalt be set free again,  
 For I will give the King small peace  
 Till thou hast pardon and release."  
 Now hearken how the wily Fox,  
 As up to heaven his eye he cocks,  
 And shakes his head with holy simper,  
 Making a sanctimonious whimper,  
 Tells forth a tale of lies and flattery,  
 Hoping to make thereof a battery  
 Wherewith he may his foes demolish,  
 While on his deeds he puts such polish  
 As may persuade the King and Queen  
 That they in jeopardy have been,  
 And make them both stare wide agape,  
 Thankful for their hairbreadth escape,  
 And ready to believe that he  
 Their saviour through these toils may be.

XVII. The  
 Fox well  
 goes.

XVII. The  
Fox well  
goes.

A H! noble King, ah! royal Queen,  
In woful case am I now seen  
(Thus he began, with rueful face),  
Telling of my dear friends' disgrace.  
But 'tis not meet I should deny  
My Queen's last mandate ere I die,  
If I speak false full well I know  
My soul to nether hell must go :  
But when ye've heard, perchance my guerdon  
May be my full relief and pardon,  
E'en as ye promised me erewhile ;  
And know I ye too free from guile  
To think you'd from your promise budge,  
Most potent King, most righteous judge.  
My soul most gladly I'd deliver,  
Which I well know must live for ever,  
And so, though much it grieves my heart,  
All those who had or lot or part  
In this foul scheme I will unmask,  
While loathes my soul the hated task."  
Quoth then the King, "This grieves me much  
And doth my very heartstrings touch,  
To think that anyone were willing  
To compass power their King by killing.  
Dost thou then surely speak the truth,  
And are thy words the words of sooth ?"  
Quoth Reynard, " Would I risk my soul,  
And taint thine ear with falsehoods foul,  
When I of death must be partaker,  
Soon to appear before my Maker ? "

Then shook he, trembling as with awe,  
At the dread prospect that he saw  
Opened before his eyes, yet he  
Hereof had small anxiety,  
For while he talked of heaven, 'twas earth  
Whose love gave all his bright schemes birth.  
When the Queen saw the piteous guise  
That the Fox wore before her eyes,  
She turned towards the King and said,  
"My gracious liege, wilt thou upbraid  
Thy Queen if she demands of thee,  
In interest of humanity,  
That thou most graciously would'st deign  
That Reynard may this tale explain,  
Whereby it would appear that we  
Are wrapt in foul conspiracy?"  
"The simple boon that Reynard begs,  
I grant," the King cried; "to the dregs  
We'll sift this tale of theft and treason.  
The truth we'll have, or know the reason."  
Then Reynard heaved a sigh profound,  
Looking reproachfully around,  
And with a voice of solemn pitch,  
Began his tale, with lies stuffed rich  
As Christmas pies with good things, or  
As thick as bees round honey store.

XVII. The  
Fox well  
gocs.

XVII. The  
Fox well  
goes.

**I** PRAY of you, good people all,  
Lend me your ears, whate'er befall,  
While I at our great King's command,  
Will tell you plainly out of hand,  
How craftily was laid this plot,  
Who are the guilty, and who not."  
Then as he some good witness lacks,  
Grymbert he calls, the faithful Dachs,  
Who would he knew support him well,  
Whatso lies he thought fit to tell,  
For many a time, in many a scrape,  
Would he the story deftly shape,  
That Reynard's villainies were deemed  
Quite other than at first they seemed.  
Then he proceeded, "First, my Lord,  
Since you full speech to me award,  
I will go back a long time rather,  
And speak of my beloved father.  
It grieves me much to say one word  
That does not perfectly accord  
With the high name he ever bore,  
But truth I'll not pervert therefore.  
You've heard tell of King Ermeryke,  
In all ways unto thee unlike  
Most gracious Lord, for crimes untold  
Committed he through lust of gold,  
And all he won he so concealed,  
That for long ages unrevealed  
It lay deep down within a pit,  
Where it might no man benefit.

This treasure did my father find,  
 And to ill thoughts it drave his mind,  
 For being of such riches master,  
 His pride than his good sense grew faster,  
 And soon became he so disdainful,  
 As made it to all beasts quite painful.  
 Then in his brain he hatched a scheme,  
 Fit only for a madman's dream,  
 Which was to set up Bruin Bear,  
 (Whom e'en now see you standing there,)  
 On your high throne, as lord and king,  
 And you in a dark dungeon fling.  
 Bruin then dwelt in old Ardenne,  
 Far from the dwelling place of men.  
 Thither my sire sent Tybert Cat,  
 With story of his waxing fat  
 In wealth, and asked the Bear to come  
 Hither, to fill thy state and room ;  
 And offered to him pelf and homage,  
 So he would join to do thee damage :  
 Forthwith accordingly came Bruin,  
 Plotting thy overthrow and ruin.  
 Anon he sent for Grymbert too,  
 Who to him stood as great nephew,  
 And with him came fierce Isegrym,  
 While Tybert made a fifth with him.  
 Then at a thorp 'twixt Ghent and Ifte  
 These five held counsel dark and shifty,  
 Through the long hours of one whole night,  
 How they might work in your despite.

XVII. The  
 Fox well  
 goes.

XVII. The    There, with the devil's help and craft,  
Fox well    They talked, they plotted, sang and laughed,  
gocs.        While with fierce wine their brains they fired  
              Till all seemed done that they desired.  
              Hearken ye now, and hear this wonder,  
              How you they would betray and plunder,  
              Call Bruin to the kingly role,  
              And on him set the sacred stole,  
              Which with the crown is kept at Aix,  
              And whence the King his honour takes.  
              And when thy true and loyal friends  
              Should fight against their wicked ends,  
              Then would my father, with his treasure,  
              Work them great despite and displeasure,  
              So that thou should'st in evil hour  
              Be driven from thy realm and power.  
              Now happed it on the morrow tide  
              Grymbert was his five wits beside,  
              With all the wine that he had drunken,  
              In bestial self-indulgence sunken.  
              So to his wife Sleepcap told he  
              This tale in strictest secrecy,  
              And of her husband's sad transgression  
              She to my wife made full confession,  
              Willing to have her counsel sage,  
              As they set forth on pilgrimage;  
              Swearing the while a solemn oath,  
              Which should be binding on them both,  
              By the three ever holy kings,  
              Whose fame such wealth to Cologne brings,

That they that secret should betray  
 In any manner, means, or way,  
 To no third person in the world,  
 Else might their souls to hell be hurled.  
 I'm bound to say these ladies twain  
 Most strictly did their tongues restrain  
 At least for four and twenty hours,  
 Much honouring their secretive powers,  
 But soon as I and Ermelyne met,  
 At once the secret out she let,  
 Not quite perhaps without compunction,  
 And with most positive injunction  
 That I, no matter where I went,  
 Should be thereof most reticent.  
 In telling of the tale had she  
 Such signs and tokens given to me,  
 That by no manner means could I  
 Misdoubt me of its verity.  
 Yet so was I with horror stricken,  
 I felt the air about me thicken,  
 My heart turned cold as lump of lead,  
 And every hair upon my head,  
 Although you see 'tis soft and fine,  
 Stood straight like quills of porcupine.

XVII. The  
 Fox well  
 goes.

**T**HEN thought I of the fable old,  
 Which thou, no doubt, hast oft heard told,  
 Of how the frogs lived free as air,  
 Without or want, or thought, or care,  
 And of them every son and daughter

XVII. The Fox well goes. Could hop on land, or swim in water,  
Without a soul to say them nay,  
Whether they chose to work or play.  
Until it fell out on a time,  
They, without reason good or rhyme,  
Complaint made unto Jove that they  
Had but a log to rule and sway  
The commonwealth in which they dwelt,  
And this they a deep grievance felt.  
Hereof made Jupiter short work,  
Sending to them a noble stork,  
Who ruled them well without mistake,  
For oft would he a breakfast make  
Of those who grumbled at his rule,  
Saying each one must be a fool  
And no right had at all to live,  
Who spoke in the accusative  
Of anything he did or said.  
Much wished they then they had no head,  
But it was all too late, for they  
Their king must bow to and obey.  
So had a like thing happened now,  
If these folk had their will, I trow,  
For then thy gracious government,  
With which all good men are content  
For that it wise is, just, and fair,  
Had given place unto the Bear,  
And who can have a doubt that he  
Had ruled with iron-hand tyranny?  
Thus grief and horror rent my soul,

To think of thee in grief and dole,  
 While this upstart the helm should steer,  
 Bully, usurp, and domineer.  
 Well do I know him for a shrew,  
 A ravener, and a robber too,  
 All men beneath his power would chafe,  
 And none of life or goods feel safe.  
 But thy mild rule, great Lord, we all  
 Feel surety 'neath, whate'er befall,  
 And folly were it, yea, sheer madness,  
 Thy good to change for Bruin's badness ;  
 Lord ! what a grand exchange it were  
 A Lion for a foul noisome Bear !  
 He and his kinsfolk, all agree,  
 Are noted for stupidity,  
 While to the wisdom of thy crown,  
 Great Lord, the whole wide world bows down.  
 Therefore within my heart hath been  
 Great sorrow, as ye well may ween,  
 And many a scheme within my head  
 Did I turn o'er, right sore bestead,  
 How I my father's evil rede  
 Might circumvent by word and deed.  
 No thing, Sire, e'er abashed me more  
 Than that my own progenitor  
 Should plot you from your throne to hurl,  
 And set thereon a traitorous churl.  
 Night after night, ere on my bed  
 I lay to rest my weary head,  
 I uttered many a fervent prayer

XVII. The  
 Fox well  
 goes.

XVII. The That from the plot and wicked snare  
Fox well Laid by your foes, kind heaven would save  
goes. Thy head, and let destruction's wave  
Sweep such vile folk from off the earth;  
Alack! that he who gave me birth  
Should at their head and front be found.  
So e'en as day and night came round,  
I studied still, with deepest thought,  
How his confusion might be wrought,  
And how perchance might be revealed  
Where all this treasure lay concealed;  
For well I knew, my artful sire,  
To carry out his purpose dire,  
Would without ruth this treasure scatter,  
And utterly his scheme 'twould shatter  
If I from him reft all this store,  
Leaving him penniless once more.

**S**O watched I him through woods and fields;  
Behind each bush the champaign yields  
I hid, to mark his every motion,  
Though he thereof had ne'er a notion.  
From back of rocks that dot the hill,  
My vigilance espied him still,  
By day, by night, in cold or heat,  
I watched his every track or beat,  
To save thy life was my one thought,  
And ever to that end I wrought.  
At last as I in ambush lay  
Within a cock of new-made hay,

From whence I peered with watchful eyes,  
To my great pleasure and surprise  
My father saw I stealing out  
From a small hole, then look about  
With careful gaze all round the spot,  
To see if he were marked or not.  
I lay so still the hay beneath  
That scarce I seemed to live or breathe,  
For any creature more acute,  
Whether in shape of man or brute,  
Than my dear father never walked,  
Yet he for just this once was balked.  
Thought I, 'Old man, you're wondrous clever,  
But at the same time you should never  
Forget that your beloved son  
With you doth make a second one :  
He carefully was trained by you,  
And therefore knows a thing or two.'  
When all around he had espied,  
The good old man seemed satisfied,  
And taking by the hole his stand  
Most carefully he raked the sand,  
To fill the orifice, and then  
He brushed it with his tail again,  
And smoothed it with his mouth till he  
Was satisfied no man could see  
E'en where his footspore had been set,  
Nor therefrom could an inkling get  
That ever had the ground been broken,  
For left he not nor sign nor token.

XVII. The  
Fox well  
goes.

XVII. The Fox well goes. That was but one of many tricks  
Which in my youthful mind did fix  
That sapient and astute old man  
Whose blood within my own veins ran,  
Though now my bosom's torn with grief  
To think he trained me for a thief.  
Well, off he trotted to the village,  
Leaving me free the hoard to pillage,  
Yet deemed he to have made all sure  
As 'twould till doom's great day endure.  
Forthwith unto the spot I jumped,  
And bit, and scratched, and tore, and thumped,  
And in about just half a minute,  
The hole was found, and I was in it.  
You'd surely deem me for a fool,  
If, having learned in such a school  
As my dear father taught, I lost  
Such chance of riches, at his cost.  
Besides, my Lord, I felt that I  
Should benefit society  
By crossing his nefarious schemes;  
And, gathering riches beyond dreams,  
Not only should I save your head,  
Most gracious Lord, as I have said,  
But I could henceforth live correctly,  
Dispensing wealth most circumspectly;  
But still the hoard remains intact,  
And shall, great Lord, be yours in fact.  
But I must tell ye what I found  
In this sly place beneath the ground,

Though much I fear the clear plain truth  
You will but take for lies forsooth.  
Full well I know I run this danger,  
Truth being than fiction so much stranger,  
But I so dearly love sincerity  
That I'll set forth the naked verity.

XVII. The  
Fox well  
goes.

**I** SCARCE need say my first sensation  
Was one of speechless admiration,  
When I beheld two splendid halls,  
With glistering floors, and sparkling walls,  
Where gold and silver lay in piles,  
That laid out would extend for miles,  
Not dull and clogged, as in dark mines,  
But bright and brilliant as it shines  
In goldsmiths' stores and kingly halls.  
Great King, the fear my mind appals  
That I can ne'er make clear to you  
The marvels that there met my view.  
Gold censers from the roof-tree swung,  
Gold shields upon the walls there clung,  
And silver hauberks, fine as gauze  
Made from the web the silkworm draws,  
But hard and close as toughest steel,  
Through which no man might sword-point feel;  
And helms with many a strange device,  
Besides a perfect paradise  
Of armlets, necklets, and such gear  
As queens and noble ladies wear;  
And beasts of silver and of gold,

XVII. The That moved e'en as the owner told,  
Fox well So deftly wrought with cunning skill,  
goes. They seemed endowed with living will  
To move, to run, to leap, to walk,  
Sweet voiced could sing, clear voiced could talk ;  
Beakers and vases knew no end ;  
My Lord, your each and every friend  
You might make rich with wealth untold,  
Yet still might wallow in red gold.  
Coins of all ages, lands, and races,  
Enough to fill a dozen places  
Wide as the court wherein we stand,  
And gems from every distant land :  
Diamonds that lighted up the cave,  
And pallid pearls from eastern wave,  
Great rubies rare, as red as blood,  
Opals, of omen ill or good,  
Sapphires, of such exceeding hue  
As mocked the sunniest ocean's blue,  
Emeralds, that imaged spring's first green,  
And topaz of bright yellow sheen,  
Lay there in most unheard profusion,  
Though I must not say in confusion,  
For all the treasures of the hoard  
Had been by my dear father stored  
And ordered with exact precision,  
Awaiting only his decision  
How to arrange the dreadful crime  
Whereof I'd learned but just in time.

**H**OME went I then to my dear wife,  
 The faithful partner of my life,  
 For none in all this world, I ween,  
 Can give advice like Ermelyne.  
 At first we planned to kill my father,  
 But that seemed a strong measure, rather,  
 So we agreed, the while that he  
 Was deep in the conspiracy,  
 We, by an act of confiscation,  
 Would ease him of the sad temptation  
 With which he was so sore beset  
 Since with that treasure he had met.  
 Our chance we had not far to seek,  
 Since he went off that very week,  
 That he might wicked counsel share  
 With Isegrym and Bruin Bear.  
 So both at once we set to work,  
 Knowing we must not labour shirk,  
 For to remove that heap of treasure  
 Was not a job to do at leisure.  
 So night and day we carried sacks,  
 And therewith nearly broke our backs,  
 In light and dark, in rain and sheen,  
 Swinked I and my dear Ermelyne,  
 And never ceased till every stiver  
 We'd carried right across the river,  
 And there within a haw or ditch,  
 A half mile long, this treasure rich  
 We stored; now pasture o'er it grows,  
 With poplar trees in serried rows.

XVII. The  
 Fox well  
 goes.

XVII. The Then Isegrym and Bruin sent  
Fox well Letters around with ill intent,  
goes. Offering to pay most monstrous wage  
To every traitor who'd engage  
To come to Bruin, so that he  
Might 'list them in his soldiery.  
Then o'er the land my father scoured,  
Thinking him by his wealth empowered  
To hold the whole world to his hire.  
How little thought my sapient sire  
His wealth was but a passing dream,  
Gone swiftly as the lightning's gleam :  
For he who thought the world to win,  
His foretime poverty was in,  
And while he talked of millions many,  
He had not in the world one penny.  
Yet all this time he ran about,  
Turning the country inside out,  
And seeking too for foreign aid,  
For he most justly was afraid  
Of the great love thy people bore  
To thy mild rule, and he therefore  
Would willingly beat up recruits  
E'en from the vilest scum of brutes,  
Who should the nearing summer come,  
From the wild land 'twixt Elbe and Somme,  
To set base Bruin on that throne  
Where thou, great King, hast right alone.

**B**UT in the land of Saxony  
Great peril of his death had he,  
When hounds and hunters followed him,  
And made him for his life to swim  
Three times across a river wide.  
But Bruin grew almost beside  
His wits with joy, when he to him  
Told how the race of Iscgrym—  
Of grey wolves old and grey wolves young  
Twelve thousand—had themselves among  
Agreed that they for him would fight,  
Forcing the wrong against the right.  
Promised the bears to come in packs,  
Besides unnumbered hosts of Dachs,  
And then the foxes and their cousins  
The cats, made up ten thousand dozens,  
Who all most faithfully had sworn  
To hold them ready, night or morn,  
And at first call of his envoys  
To hurry up, both men and boys,  
But always stipulated they  
Should in advance have one month's pay.  
All this, thank heaven, I learned in time  
To frustrate their most fearful crime.  
Then watched I how my father went  
Towards his hiding place, intent  
On carrying out his wicked scheming,  
And never of frustration dreaming.  
Now I and Ermelyne had care  
To make all things look straight and square,

XVII. The  
Fox well  
goes.

XVII. The Leaving of change no sign or trace  
Fox well About my father's hoarding place.  
goes. We scratched the sand up with our nails,  
And smoothed it over with our tails,  
In such wise, as I'd bet a dollar,  
Were done but by my father's scholar.  
When first my wary sire appeared,  
Most carefully around he speered,  
To make sure he was all alone;  
Had he espied his well-loved son,  
Much likelihood there is, I fear,  
That son had not to-day been here.  
An opening scratched he with his toes,  
And then poked in his knowing nose,  
Then disappeared inside awhile,  
Which I must own provoked a smile  
From me, who in my hiding place  
Guessed the expression of his face  
When he should find the courts all bare,  
And how he'd rave, and how he'd stare,  
And how he'd swear, as once before  
I've heard with sorrow that he swore.  
Short space to wait for him I had,  
For he came tearing out like mad,  
And ran he round about the plain  
As though he really were insane;  
Then in he rushed, then out he popped,  
And some most awful words he dropped,  
His tail he bit, his ears he scratched,  
With anger hitherto unmatched,

Then danced about in sheer vexation  
That he could find no explanation  
How he so suddenly should be  
Reduced once more to beggary.  
Then in he ran, and out he brought  
A rope wherewith we both had caught,  
When we went trotting out together  
In the bright moonlight frosty weather,  
Full many a rabbit or fine hare,  
Which we right merrily would share ;  
But that was in our happy days,  
Before he took to devious ways.  
Well, of this rope he made a loop,  
And giving a terrific whoop,  
Before I could say, one, two, three,  
He scrambled up a hawthorn tree,  
Whence in no time he was suspended,  
And so, alas ! his life was ended.

XVII. The  
Fox well  
goes.

I OWN that this last solemn function  
Caused in my breast heart-felt compunction,  
But I could not forget that he  
Had plotted 'gainst your Majesty.  
So soon as I had dried my eyes,  
I set about the obsequies  
Of my dear parent ; and to make  
A most imposing funeral wake,  
I summoned every fox alive,  
From every land where foxes thrive,  
And straight responded to my call

XVII. The Fox well goes. The varied race of foxes all.  
 Came foxes red, and foxes brown,  
 From every village, thorp, and town,  
 And foxes black, and foxes white,  
 Was ne'er seen such a foxy sight,  
 And each one carried on his tail  
 A scarf, and on his head a veil,  
 As token of his deep regret  
 For the sad fate my father met.  
 And all agreed that the procession  
 Seen at your Majesty's accession  
 Could not be reckoned more imposing  
 Than my dear father's proud deposing.  
 We set not up a pile of stones,  
 But made a monument of bones  
 Formed of all beasts and birds that he  
 Had slain in his prosperity ;  
 And 'twas allowed, by one and all,  
 The idea was original,  
 Thus to combine a grand museum  
 With a most splendid mausoleum.

GREAT King, see in what hard estate  
 I now was plunged by cruel fate,  
 And how this traitor Isegrim,  
 And Bruin, who holds fast by him,  
 Sitting as councillors and lords,  
 With all the power such place affords,  
 Used all their influence to undo  
 One who has faithful been to you,

And who has strained his every nerve  
 His King and Lord to save and serve,  
 And thereto let his father perish  
 Whom else 'twere his to tend and cherish.  
 What other lives in all creation  
 Who hath such care for your salvation  
 As the poor faithful, ill-used Fox,  
 Who gets small meed save cuffs and knocks? "  
 Then King and Queen together shouted,  
 "Reynard, thy honour can't be doubted,  
 But tell us where this treasure lies,  
 That we thereon may feast our eyes,  
 And take such measures as may be  
 Needful for its security."  
 "Nay but," quoth Reynard, "would ye have me  
 E'en like a ninny thus behave me?  
 For here, great King, in chains I lie,  
 Condemned a shameful death to die,  
 While sit around ye these same traitors,  
 My cruel foes and base delators,  
 Who by their flattery and fawning,  
 Would have me hanged ere morrow's dawning.  
 To tell them of my treasure pit  
 Would argue that I'd lost my wit."  
 Straight quoth the Queen: "But Reynard, dear,  
 Have of thy life no further fear,  
 I with the King will intercede,  
 And ever hearkeneth he my rede,  
 So shalt thou have forgiveness free  
 Of all ill deeds e'er done by thee,

XVII. The  
 Fox well  
 goes.

XVII. The Fox well goes. And thou our council-board shalt grace,  
Holding next to ourselves thy place,  
So may'st thou all thy foes outface."  
Quoth Reynard, "For reward and guerdon  
I ask no more than my free pardon,  
And if my sovereign Lord the King  
Will deign to do this gracious thing,  
Then never prince, no matter which,  
Shall be in all the world so rich,  
For as of heaven's stars 'tis said,  
No mortal hath them numbered,  
So of this wealth's untold amount  
No living man could e'er make count,  
Endless as daisies on the lea,  
Exhaustless as the boundless sea!"

**D**EAR Dame," the King cried, "do ye credit  
This tale because the Fox hath said it?  
Saving your presence, know ye not  
'That ne'er can from the flesh be got  
That which is bred within the bone?'  
And that the Fox is such an one,  
As, since new born he first did cry,  
Hath learned to cheat, and steal, and lie?"  
"Nay," quoth the Queen, "ye are too hard,  
Shall the poor Fox then be debarred  
From changing all his evil ways,  
To live in honour, worth and praise?  
Who lives, that one way or another  
Hath not transgressed against his brother?"

Have ye not heard how well betimes  
He frustrated his father's crimes?  
The Dachs also, his dear nephew,  
Of his misdeeds he told us too,  
Think ye he would accuse his friends,  
Merely to serve his private ends?  
Strangers he better might impeach,  
Would he us merely overreach,  
For that would serve his turn as well  
Were he a liar false and fell.  
"Well, well," the King cried, "if you, Dame,  
Will have me to believe this same,  
I will no more dispute the matter,  
But to the winds all doubts will scatter,  
And believe Reynard to be true  
Since you for his acceptance sue.  
But swear I by my sacred crown,  
And by my ermined velvet gown,  
That if the Fox should once again  
Misdo and trespass, I will rain  
Such vengeance on him and on those  
Who own his lineage, that the crows  
And other birds of prey shall feed  
For months to come upon the breed  
Of foxes, and their kind shall be  
Destroyed unto the ninth degree."  
The Fox gazed on the King stoundmele,  
Then joyous in his heart did feel,  
And cried, "My Lord, I were not wise  
If I should put you off with lies,

XVII. The  
Fox well  
goes.

XVII. The Too sapient and acute are you  
Fox well To credit tales that be untrue."  
goes.

**T**HE King from off the ground uptook  
A straw, and on the Fox did look ;  
Quoth he, " As brittle as this straw  
Count I that ordinance and law  
By which thou art condemned to die  
For murder, theft, and villainy.  
So as this straw is reft and broken,  
Let it be unto thee a token  
That I forgive both thy misdeeds,  
And all thy father's evil re-des  
Whereby he sought to honour Bruin,  
Compassing our o'erthrow and ruin."  
Then quivered Reynard's heart with joy,  
For once more 'gan fair hope to buoy  
His spirits up, and he his brain  
Hard taxes to work out a train  
Of fiction which may cause the King  
To set by him in everything,  
While dole and grief may be the share  
Of his sworn foes the Wolf and Bear.





XVIII · HOW · THE · FOX · GAVE ·  
· HIS · THANKS · TO · THE · KING · &c ·  
· TOLD · OF · THE · HIDING · PLACE ·  
· OF · A · GREAT · TREASURE ·

**E**XCLAIMED the Fox, "Great King and Queen, XVIII. The  
Your grace once more hath made me clean Wolf's dread  
From charges whereby many a foe care.  
Hath sought my cruel overthrow.  
This worship that ye hereby do me,  
Shall ever be a memory to me;  
And thank you in such wise shall I,  
That 'mid the kingly company  
That rules throughout the world, shalt thou  
Be counted richest, for I trow,  
No other king beneath the sun  
Has gained such wealth as thou hast done."  
Then took the Fox a straw in hand,  
Saying with smile, and visage bland,  
"My Lord, take thou this straw as earnest  
That all the wealth for which thou burnest,  
E'en for thine own I give to thee,  
As thou thy grace hast given to me.  
The treasure which King Ermeryke had,  
Is thine henceforth, for good or bad,  
With full free will I give it thee,  
Take it 'fore all men openly."  
The King took joyously the straw,  
As though the gift thereby in law

XVIII. The Were made as safe and undisputed  
Wolf's dread As if ten deeds were executed,  
care. And thanks gave to the Fox, as he  
Had the gold in his treasury.  
Then Reynard gravely winked his eye,  
And said aside, "Now may I die,  
If this is not a splendid stroke,  
And truly a most glorious joke."  
Then King and Court to Reynard hearkened,  
While he with words their counsel darkened,  
And the whole party did cajole  
With this succeeding rigmarole.

Q UOTH he, "My Lord, attend ye well,  
While the momentous tale I tell,  
By which you may the treasure draw  
From out the fosse or deep haw-haw  
Wherein myself and my dear wife  
Stored it at risk of limb and life.  
In Flanders, on the western side,  
There stands a wood, thick-grown and wide,  
'Tis Hulsterlo it hath to name,  
And Krekynpit lies by the same,  
Close to a water vast and deep,  
Where birds and beasts in safety keep,  
For 'tis a wilderness so drear  
That ages long, from year to year,  
Scarce foot of man or wife is set  
Within its borders, or they get  
So great a horror and dismay

That quickly all foredone are they.  
Bethink ye well of Krekynpit,  
For with that name is interknit  
The secret of the golden hoard  
That I so painfully have stored.  
List then the mystery of that word,  
Which none till this time e'er hath heard :

K for KEEP,

R for RIGHT,

E for EVER in thy sight.

K for KNOW,

Y for YOU

N for NEVER grief nor rue.

P for PAIN

I for IN

T for TREASURE who doth win ?

These lines three times thou must say o'er,  
Whene'er ye seek the golden store.  
Go not alone, but with thee take  
Thy lady queen, and for her sake,  
That she in safety may abide,  
Have with thee, for thy guard and guide,  
Two trusty servitors, who may  
Save thee from peril night and day.  
So come ye unto Krekynpit,  
And where the lake in two doth split,  
Leaving a tongue of land between,  
With towering poplars well beseen,  
Find ye two silver birchen trees,  
Mark well around the root of these,

XVIII. The  
Wolf's dread  
care.

XVIII. The And ye shall find two small white stones,  
Wolf's dread Graved with a death's head and cross bones ;  
care.

Then if ye six yards farther follow,  
And stamp, an empty sound and hollow  
Shall greet thine ears ; dig there and ye,  
Just six feet down, a door shall see,  
Made fast with bars and bolts and locks,  
Contrived by me and Mistress Fox.

Stamp there three times, and then at once  
The doors shall open with a bounce,  
And straight before your dazzled eyes  
Shall ye behold this glorious prize.

I need not once again repeat  
What treasures rich your sight will greet,  
For ye have heard it once, and ye  
Shall soon prove my sincerity.

But above all, one wondrous work  
Within that treasure house doth lurk,  
Wrought by dwarf hands in days of old,  
Of rare gems and rich ruddy gold,  
Its sight your heart with joy will strike,  
The crown 'twas of King Ermeryke,  
Storied with warlike deeds that he  
Had done in his high majesty.

This crown would the vile traitorous Bear  
Have ta'en on his rude head to wear,  
But now, as is just, right and fit,  
Thy glorious head shall honour it.  
My Lord, when all this good is thine  
And glittering doth around thee shine,

Then shalt thou say within thine heart,  
'Reynard the Fox, how true thou art,  
That by thy subtle wit and skill,  
Did thus our soul with joy fulfil;  
May God good hap give unto thee,  
And welfare wheresoe'er ye be.'"  
The King shook solemnly his head,  
And with great gravity he said :  
"Sir Reynard, thou must come also,  
This wealth to dig, for who can know  
So well as thou, the way and road  
To that most secret dark abode ?  
Of Paris have I oft heard tell,  
And London town know I right well,  
Cologne, and its three holy kings,  
And Acon famous for sacrings;  
And Zurich's far-famed lake or sea  
Familiar also is to me,  
Doth this same Krekynpit then lie  
To either of these places nigh ?  
The name ne'er yet hath met mine ear,  
And therewith scoff ye, as I fear ;  
Methinks that some feigned name ye shape,  
And dost thereby but mock and jape."  
These words by no means pleasant were  
To Reynard, who with injured air  
And angry look, yet without stammer  
Prepared to give the King a slammer.  
"My Lord," he cried, "what, should ye say,  
The distance is 'twixt flowery May

XVIII. The  
Wolf's dread  
care.

XVIII. The And the eternal city Rome,  
 Wolf's dread Where our Lord's Vicar hath his home?  
 care. Or doth your Majesty suppose  
 The Rhine stream near from Jordan flows?  
 Your knowledge of the country's lie  
 Seems to me just a trifle shy;  
 Yea, my good Lord, ye do but *think*,  
 While I the while may strive and swink;  
 Ye shall have witness for your thinking,  
 Would ye the fount of truth be drinking;  
 If ye would know what thing truth is,  
 Hearken my faithful witnesses.  
 Then called he loud, "Come, honest Cuwaert,  
 Though not from Krekynpit thou new art,  
 Yet having been there, times gone by,  
 Thou canst describe it perfectly;  
 Stand forth before the King and Queen,  
 And tell them straight what thou hast seen.  
 Why dost thou tremble so and quake?  
 Meseems thou art but half awake;  
 Speak before all the naked truth,  
 Without concealment, fear, or ruth.  
 Here need'st thou dread no sort of evil,  
 So 'speak the truth and shame the devil.'"  
 Poor Cuwaert surely looked half dead,  
 His teeth were chattering in his head,  
 His long ears drooped upon his back,  
 As he'd been threatened with the rack.  
 He seemed indeed without volition,  
 In most deplorable condition.

Quoth he, "Although ye see me trembling,  
 I've not a notion of dissembling,  
 I only wish to say what's true,  
 And at the same time to please you ;  
 And if I chance to tell a lie,  
 May heaven forgive me ere I die."  
 Quoth Reynard, "Now pluck up your wit,  
 And say where standeth Krekynpit.  
 Speak, Cuwaert, if ye know the spot,  
 Or hold your peace, if ye do not."  
 Quoth he, "Twelve years are past, I trow,  
 Since, to fulfil a holy vow,  
 I saw that place, which I confess  
 Is a most dreary wilderness ;  
 It standeth where fierce wild winds blow,  
 Near the dark wood of Hulsterlo ;  
 There suffered I fierce hunger dread,  
 And cold enough to freeze me dead :  
 Bare memory of that country drear  
 Renews within me cruel fear.  
 Lived there one Father Symonet,  
 Methinks I see him working yet  
 At forging base coin, wherewith he  
 Kept up a merry company.  
 But that was ere the time I found  
 Good fellowship with Ryn the Hound,  
 And were he here he'd gladly tell  
 How many a time he served me well,  
 Hiding me one day in a manger,  
 When I was in the direst danger,

XVIII. The  
 Wolf's dread  
 care.

XVIII. The And he'd bear witness how that I  
Wolf's dread Ne'er plotted 'gainst his Majesty."  
care.

Quoth Reynard, "Here thy witness ends,  
Trot off, good Cuwaert, to thy friends."  
Then turning to the King, quoth he,  
"My Lord, I think ye grieved must be  
That ye such hard injustice spoke,  
Treating my speechword as a joke."  
"Yea," quoth the King, "I crave thy pardon,  
I thy veracity was hard on;  
But now, good Reynard, let us go,  
It is but meet that ye should show  
The way on to this wonder place,  
Which thou with ease canst track and trace,  
While we much labour might bestow,  
Which yet might to small purpose grow."  
Quoth Reynard, "Needeth your insistance?  
For think ye I should make resistance,  
If it were possible for me  
To journey in your company?  
But see ye not 'twould be great blame,  
And ye thereof should have much shame,  
If with ye there were seen a man  
Who lieth under holy ban?  
Hearken ye, then, and giving ear,  
Straightway shalt thou have knowledge clear  
How 'neath the church's curse I lie,  
For charge of shame and villainy.  
I fear that Isegrym's religion  
Is like the courage of a pigeon,

Ne'er seen by man—good reason why,  
That 'tis a minus quantity,  
And time past, prompted by the devil,  
He tempted me to parlous evil.  
He erst a monk was, frocked and shorn,  
Although no viler sinner born  
Was ever in the whole wide world ;  
Curses he ever at me hurled  
Because, though he would eat and stuff  
All day, ne'er could he have enough ;  
No food could fill his belly cavernous,  
Ever he hungry was and ravenous ;  
Though six monks' portions eat he daily,  
He ever cried, ' 'tis mean and scaly ; '  
He plained, and wailed, and cursed me sore,  
Because I could not get him more,  
And at the last he grew so ill,  
Moaning he ne'er could have his fill,  
That I advised him, one fine day,  
Was nought to do but run away  
To where he might in plenty wallow,  
And satisfy his morbid swallow.  
That did he, and accursed I lie  
From now till all eternity  
For having counselled him the breaking  
Of that most solemn undertaking  
Whereby he bound himself to be  
A brother of the monkery.  
Thus then ye see before ye stand  
One whom our Lord the Pope has banned,

XVIII. The  
Wolf's dread  
care.

XVIII. The And till I get for restitution  
 Wolf's dread The Holy Father's absolution,  
 care.  
 I am no fit companion for  
 My King, as guide and counsellor.  
 But soon as e'er the morrow's sun  
 Sets forth his daily course to run,  
 Will I my journey take towards Rome,  
 Leaving my darling wife and home,  
 And from the Holy Father get  
 Full pardon, then my steps I'll set  
 Towards eastern climes in pilgrimage,  
 And in good works will there engage,  
 With shell in hat and staff in hand,  
 A palmer through the Holy Land ;  
 And only thence will I return  
 When that my cheeks no more need burn  
 With shame of sin, but you may grip  
 My shriven hand in fellowship :  
 And then together will we go  
 To the wild land of Hulsterlo.  
 But should your Majesty be seen  
 With one accursèd, then I ween,  
 Dishonour and a damage great  
 'Twould be accounted to the state.  
 Men would the finger point of scorn  
 To see thee with one lost and lorn,  
 Or wending with thee as thy mate  
 A wretched excommunicate."  
 Replied the King, " Yea, as ye stand,  
 A cursed man throughout the land,

To consort with thee might inflict  
 Upon us all an interdict,  
 Which untold evils would bring down  
 Upon my people and my crown.  
 So count I Cuwaert pilot fit  
 To guide me unto Krekynpit,  
 And to ye, Reynard, give I rede  
 To get thyself assoiled with speed,  
 And set free from the church's curse,  
 Lest that ye fall from bad to worse."  
 Quoth Reynard, "Romewards is my way,  
 Resting not thither night nor day,  
 Until my soul be clean and pure,  
 And I of heaven's sweet bliss feel sure."  
 A tear stood in King Nobel's eye,  
 He cried with broken voice, "Good-bye,  
 Heaven have you in its holy care,  
 And keep ye from the devil's snare."

XVIII. The  
 Wolf's dread  
 care.

S O soon as was this speaking done,  
 Mounted King Nobel on his throne,  
 Commanding silence to the crowd  
 Of beasts who stood there, chattering loud,  
 And that they forthwith in a ring  
 Should set them in due ordering,  
 Each after his estate and birth,  
 Soft seated on the grass-grown earth;  
 While Reynard Fox, now well beseen,  
 Stood in high honour by the Queen,  
 Whom, with good reason, he should love

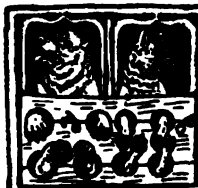
XVIII. The All people in the world above.  
Wolf's dread Then spake the King with loud, clear voice,  
care. " Good people, all of ye rejoice,  
Both rich and poor, both young and old,  
At the good tidings I unfold.  
Reynard was whilom only second  
In all our royal kingdom reckoned,  
And him 'fore all did we prefer  
As our most trusted officer ;  
But later, prompted by the devil,  
He took to ways and courses evil,  
And having made his life thus forfeit,  
We saw no way to let him off it,  
And well-nigh did he this same day  
His solemn debt to justice pay.  
But now, in just consideration  
Of a most thorough expiation  
That he hath made of his misdeeds,  
By full disclosures, shrifts, and redes,  
We've granted him our grace and pardon,  
Friendship, relief, and well-earned guerdon.  
According all our dear Queen asks,  
He once more in our favour basks,  
From all his crimes exonerated,  
And in his honours reinstated.  
Therefore I charge ye, on your life,  
No longer hold with Reynard strife,  
But let himself, his wife, and kin,  
Due reverence from all people win,  
And honoured be in all men's sight,

Where'er he goes by day or night ;  
 And charge I you that none attain  
 Reynard by any evil plaint.  
 Well know I how he hath misdone,  
 But that's forgiven, past, and gone,  
 Hereafter he'll no more misdo,  
 But pattern give to all of you.  
 Soon as the morrow's morning breaks,  
 His way unto the Pope he takes,  
 Pardon to seek for all his sins,  
 And henceforth he new life begins.  
 Then o'er the perilous wide sea  
 Unto the Holy Land goes he,  
 And home returning as a palmer  
 Shall lead a life than hermit's calmer."

XVIII. The  
 Wolf's dread  
 care.

**H**EREAT gave Tyselyn a croak,  
 (The Raven he, who rarely spoke,)  
 And cried, "Ha! ha! now Reynard's quit,  
 And we'll have a rare time of it."  
 Then hopped he to where Isegrym  
 Stood quivering in his every limb,  
 And Bruin too, and Tybert Cat,  
 Thinking what they should next be at.  
 "Ye caitiffs, how then stands it now?"  
 Croaked Tyselyn, "Ye'll be off, I trow;  
 Well may ye to your holes retire  
 Now Reynard courtier is and squire,  
 And with good cause may he make sport  
 Of you, now he's supreme at Court.

XIII. The    The King hath quit him of his brokes,  
Wolf's dread    And all the merry, playful strokes,  
care.        Which ye have called misdeeds and crimes,  
              Played off on you in bygone times;  
              Now once more is his fortune made,  
              And ye dishonoured and betrayed."  
              Cried Isegrym, "What means this tale?  
              Doth justice in the kingdom fail?  
              Ywis, friend Tyselyn, ye lie!"  
              "That do I not, assuredly,"  
              Croaked forth the Raven, "If I do,  
              Just make your suit the King unto."  
              Then quoth the Wolf unto the Bear,  
              "This is a tale to make one stare;  
              Yet stand we not here sorrowing,  
              But let us straight unto the King."  
              Poor Tybert Cat felt mortal fear,  
              And dared not go the Fox anear;  
              Quoth he, "This is sad work indeed,  
              'Comes evil fruit of evil seed,'  
              Had I but left the Fox alone  
              Ne'er with me had he picked a bone.  
              Now, if his goodwill I could buy,  
              I'd gladly give my other eye.  
              A wretched pickle am I in,  
              To save my life I'd give my skin.  
              Alas! for Fortune's cruel mocks,  
              That e'er I saw this wretched Fox!"



XIX· HOW· THE· WOLF· &·  
THE· BEAR· WERE· ARREST·  
ED· BY· THE· LABOUR· OF·  
REYNARD·

XIX. The  
Wolf's lost  
shoes.

WITH solemn strut, and bearing proud,  
Stept Isegrym through all the crowd  
That stood around the kingly throne,

And in a loud and angry tone  
He thanked the Queen, but in such mood,  
That better had his words been rude,  
For fair speech framed in caustic guise  
Most bitterly one's patience tries,  
And the King's temper, like an eddy  
Which swings both ways, was then quite ready  
To take offence at any word  
That he for good or evil heard;  
For though he'd pardoned Reynard, he  
Was haunted by dubiety.  
So soon as Isegrym unlocks  
His lips to speak against the Fox,  
Upon him he like thunder fell,  
Raining down oaths on him pell mell,  
That back the Wolf full six feet bounded,  
Amazed, bewildered, and confounded.  
Then cried the King, with furious air,  
" Arrest these scoundrels, Wolf and Bear.  
Let them be strictly kept in guard,  
And set to labour dure and hard,

XIX. The  
Wolf's lost  
shoes.

And for their insolent, proud words,  
See that stout cord their bodies girds.  
Never two dogs gone raving mad  
More harsh and cruel treatment had,  
Nor hand nor foot they scarce could stir,  
While the cords cut right through their fur,  
Nor dared they make complaint nor roar,  
No matter how their limbs were sore.

**H**EAR now of the fell Fox's spite,  
Wherewith he would his foes requite.  
To compass on them deadly hate,  
Fair words he to the Queen did prate,  
Saying that for his Romewards trip  
He fain would have a bearing scrip  
To hold his provender and beads,  
And otherwise to serve his needs.  
"Now," quoth he, "there is nought so fair  
To make a scrip, as skin of Bear,  
And, therefore, O most gracious Queen,  
You'll count it no great thing, I ween,  
That sooner than a scrip I lack,  
I cut me one from Bruin's back ;  
Just one foot broad and one foot long,  
You know I'd never do him wrong,  
But just a little bit like that  
Would ne'er be missed from one so fat ;  
And then, dear madam, you'd not choose  
That in these thin and well-worn shoes  
Your faithful Reynard should engage

In such a lengthy pilgrimage ;  
Therefore, great Queen, I ask as boon  
That from the feet of this fierce loon,  
My uncle Isegrym, you'll grant  
To me the very thing I want.  
He hath, you see, four well-made shoes,  
The use whereof he doth abuse  
In worrying the whole creation  
By meddling and by depredation.  
Now, madam, would you let me choose  
From off his feet one pair of shoes,  
He still would have one left, you see,  
Which would serve him sufficiently ;  
And passing then upon my way,  
For your soul's health I'd ever pray,  
Remembering evermore that ye  
With these good shoes had furnished me.  
Also my Aunt, Dame Ersewyn,  
Hath four shoes that she walketh in,  
Yet hath so little work to do,  
She'd very well be served by two ;  
So of her shoes she well might spare,  
With your kind leave, the hinder pair."  
Quoth the good Queen, "I'm quite content  
That the wolves' shoes to thee be lent,  
For, travelling o'er that stony road,  
'Tis needful ye be soundly shod.  
Nowhere you better shoes will find  
Than those Dame Ersewyn wears behind,  
And no man ever stouter wore

XIX. The  
Wolf's lost  
shoes.

XIX. The  
Wolf's lost  
shoes.

Than Isegrym doth wear before.  
Perhaps they'll think it strange in me  
To give away their property,  
But trust they will remember, it  
Is for the general benefit;  
So though their lives it e'en should touch,  
They should not think thereon too much,  
But be content and thankful they  
Some good can do in their small way,  
And thus should cheerfully engage  
To help you on your pilgrimage.



XX· HOW· ISEG YM· &· ERSE·  
WYN· MUST· SUFFER· THEIR·  
SHOES· TO· BE· PLUCKED· OFF·  
&· HOW· THEY· WERE· DONE· ON·  
TO· REYNARD·

XX. Rey-  
nard's far  
fare.

**T**HUS hath this shameless, false pilgrim,  
Gotten two shoes from Isegrym,  
Who, on his back by stout knaves tossed,  
Lay still as doth a fowl at roast.  
He never stirred, nor one word said,  
Though cruelly his poor feet bled,  
While, roughly, off his shoes they haled,  
Which on him direst woe entailed,  
Leaving each poor unhappy claw  
Stripped to the sinews, red and raw.  
Now through the same sharp fire, alas !  
His wife, Dame Ersewyn, must pass,  
And as they treated his fore paws,

So will they serve her hinder claws ;  
Down then they threw her on the sward,  
Her limbs bound with a cruel cord,  
And, as she lay in terror sore,  
Her shoes from her hind feet they tore.  
False Reynard stood beside the while,  
With mocking and sardonic smile ;  
And cried, " Dear Aunt, my heart doth ache  
To see ye suffer for my sake,  
Most sorely thereof I repent,  
And well you know I'm innocent  
Of any but the best intention,  
And, but for my kind intervention,  
They would have stripped away your skin  
To make a cloak to wrap me in.  
Of all my aunts and uncles many  
You know I love you best of any.  
I mind me oft how you'd correct me,  
And from the house door you'd eject me,  
Saying I should not pick and steal,  
When all I wanted was a meal ;  
But those times are all bygone now,  
And I forgive you, anyhow.  
Dear Uncle Isegrym and you  
Will profit much by what I do,  
For you shall both my partners be  
In my long voyage across the sea ;  
And though I be at all the pains,  
Ye shall share equally the gains,  
Which I shall soon obtain, I hope,

XX. Reynard's far  
fare.

XX. Reynard's far  
fare.

At Rome from our good lord the Pope;  
And half the pardon giving you,  
Ye ne'er will blame your dear nephew.  
Dame Ersewyn wallowed so in woe,  
She scarce could answer yes or no,  
But at last pulled herself together,  
And cried, "Ah! Reynard, though your tether  
Seem now a long one, Heaven send  
That one day it may have an end;  
Such wickedness must have some check,  
Which Heaven upon your head will wreak."  
The Wolf and Bear no answer made,  
Foredone were they, and sore afraid,  
Wounded, and bound; and ill at ease,  
Deeply they felt such gibes as these.  
Tybert the Cat sat up above,  
Within a tree, he had small love  
To suffer in such evil wise  
As did his friends before his eyes,  
So at the very first alarm  
He put himself from way of harm.

**T**HEN, with the rathe grey streaks of morn,  
The Fox did his four feet adorn  
With his new shoes, well tied and greased,  
And looked therewith most mighty pleased.  
Now was he ready and complete,  
His feet well shod, all trim and neat,  
And the full victual for his trip  
Set neatly in his bearskin srip.

Then straight before the King and Queen  
Appeared he spruce and well beseen ;  
Profound obeisance first made he,  
Then cried, "Great Lord and noble Lady,  
May heaven grant you a good morrow,  
And keep you from all grief and sorrow.  
One thing I of your grace require  
Ere from your presence I retire,  
'Tis only what each pilgrim hath  
Ere he sets forward on his path,  
Namely, that both my staff and scrip  
May blest be by the fellowship  
Of holy priesthood, and that so  
'Neath shadow of the Church I go."  
Willing to favour Reynard's bent,  
Forthwith the King for Bellyn sent,  
Bellyn the Ram, who said high mass  
Whene'er the King's occasion was ;  
And quoth he, "My good friend Sir Bellyn,  
None other is there read so well in  
The Church's sacred codes and laws,  
Say, therefore, know ye any cause  
Why ye should not say holy mass  
Ere Reynard on his journey pass,  
And staff and scrip with counsel sage  
Bless for his pious pilgrimage?"  
Bellyn the Ram looked sore aghast,  
And cried, "My Lord, ye talk too fast,  
No mass for him dare I rehearse  
While he lies 'neath the Church's curse."

XX. Reynard's far  
fare.

XX. Reynard's far  
fare.

Quoth the King, "What thereof to tell is,  
Know ye not then that Master Gelys  
Tells us that if a man hath done  
All sins e'er heard of 'neath the sun,  
And yet would all those sins forsake,  
Shrive him, and then due penance make,  
And after by priests' counsel live,  
So God will all his sins forgive,  
And to him such sweet mercy show  
That he at death to heaven will go?  
Now Reynard to foredo the brand  
Of sin, will to the Holy Land  
Go over sea, in those far climes  
Making him free of all his crimes,  
And first of all, to get, hath hope,  
Free pardon from our Lord the Pope."  
Quoth Bellyn then unto the King :  
"This seems a ticklish sort of thing ;  
Wilt thou me harmless hold therefore  
Before great Bishop Prendelor,  
Who in his spiritual court  
Trounces the priests whose lives come short  
Of what Archdeacon Loosandbind  
Considers of the righteous kind ?  
And, too, before Sir Rapiamus,  
Who, if we slip, knows how to tame us ? "  
Flashed the King's eyes with angry fire,  
And from his lips broke words of ire ;  
Quoth he, "Ye list not then my prayer ?  
This one thing asked in half a year.

I'd liever hang you any day,  
Than from you favours beg and pray."  
When the Ram saw the King wax wroth,  
His knees so smote and knocked them both,  
One might have thought he'd joined the Quakers,  
Or that still stranger sect, the Shakers.  
But to the altar straight went he,  
And sang his mass right solemnly,  
And of his books read out such portion,  
As would not seem too much distortion  
Of their high meaning, but would be  
A sop to the King's vanity.  
Therefor cared Reynard not one jot,  
But that it suited with his plot.  
When Bellyn, with an air devout,  
Had sung the service all throughout,  
He hung round Reynard's neck the scrip,  
And fastened it upon his hip.  
Then in his hand a sturdy palster  
He put, that he no more a haltster,  
Could with excuse or reason be,  
But should start off immediately.  
Then Reynard turned his head aside,  
And from his eye a tear-drop dried,  
As with a broken voice he stammered  
To show that in his heart he yammered,  
"Ah ! my good lord and dearest King,  
What sorrow to my heart doth bring  
This parting, now I feel that I  
Must leave you thus all suddenly.

XX. Reynard's far  
fare.

XX. Reynard's far  
fare.

Ah ! now I know what parting means,  
But I'll not cry, for I hate scenes."  
Truth was, his only pain and grief  
Was that his time was all too brief  
To serve a many others there  
As he had served the Wolf and Bear.  
Yet begged he with great earnestness  
Of those who stood there in the press,  
That they for him would offer prayers,  
As he would pray for them and theirs.  
Quoth he, " I must no longer tarry,  
For the great weight of sins I carry  
Weighs down my soul, and it is meet  
That at the Holy Father's feet  
I bow without procrastination,  
And thus make sure of my salvation."  
Replied the King, " I really grieve  
To think ye must so quickly leave."  
Quoth Reynard, " Nay, my lord, 'tis time  
I started for that distant clime,  
I pray you give me leave to go ;  
Little I thought 'twould grieve me so,  
I hardly did my feelings gauge  
When entering on this pilgrimage."  
Replied the King, " God keep you well,  
My sorrow nought can parallel.  
But stay," cried he, in eager tone,  
" 'Twere not fit you should start alone,  
Let every man in this array  
See Reynard safely on his way,

Except the Wolf and Bear, who lie  
 Bound justly for their villainy."  
 Though many felt this grief and shame  
 Yet not one durst to speak the same.  
 Good Lord! It would have made ye laugh  
 Had ye seen Reynard with his staff,  
 Which in his hand he held, as straight  
 He'd walk right up to heaven's gate.  
 His scrip upon his shoulder hung,  
 While unto his four feet there clung  
 The poor Wolves' shoes, and so well shod  
 With proud and mincing gait he trod.  
 Thus solemnly he made believe,  
 But heartily laughed in his sleeve,  
 To think that those who brought him forth,  
 And treated him as so well worth,  
 And so politely now harangued him,  
 Were the same folk who would have hanged him;  
 Now was he with his double face  
 Truly a pilgrim of deuce ace.

XX. Reynard's far  
 fare.

**M**Y Lord the King," quoth then the Fox,  
 "To see the people in such flocks,  
 I feel an honour all too great  
 For a poor excommunicate.  
 Pray ye, my lord, return again,  
 Bethink ye of those murderers twain,  
 Bruin and Isegrym, if they  
 Should from their bond-cords break away,  
 What grievous hurt might then befall

XX. Reynard's far  
fare.

To you and to your people all.  
Most humbly pray I heaven to keep  
My lord, if he or wake or sleep."  
Then stood he on his hinder legs,  
Like to a poodle dog that begs,  
And cried, "Dear friends, who stand around,  
I trust that none may here be found  
Who will not give me of their prayers,  
For thereby each poor sinner shares  
In the great pardon that I seek  
As pilgrim holy, pure and meek."  
And all cried out, "So let it be,  
Oh! pray for us, as we for thee."  
Then, with a burst of grief and sorrow,  
He bid the King a long good-morrow.  
Next with a merry face and gay,  
He cried to Cuwaert, "Let's away!  
And you, dear Bellyn, with good heart  
Join with us in our forward start;  
Ye will not your old friend forsake,  
But of his travel will partake.  
Never between us three, ye know,  
Did angry word or gesture show;  
Courteous and good and friendly ye  
Have ever shewed you unto me,  
In ways of living meritorious,  
And to the world example glorious.  
Like mine, when I lived a recluse,  
Your lives are free from all abuse,  
Feeding on simple leaves and grass,

Nor bread nor flesh your lips e'er pass;  
 Nor everwhile of meat luxurious  
 Are ye or gluttonous or curious."  
 Thus he, with false and flattering words  
 Tangleth their souls as limed twigs birds,  
 So that they readily agree  
 To walk with him to Malperdy.

XX. Reynard's far  
 fare,



XXI. HOW CUWART THE  
 HARE WAS SLAIN BY  
 REYNARD THE FOX. §

**A**RRIVED before Malperdy gate,  
 Reynard seemed all disconsolate,  
 Saying to Bellyn, "Cousin, dear,  
 Abide a little, prithee, here,  
 For I and Cuwaert well you ween  
 Must take our leave of Ermelyne;  
 Unto her soul some comfort giving,  
 Towards her solitary living;  
 And to my children, too, would I  
 Give some good counsel lovingly."  
 Thus, with his smooth and floyting tongue  
 Into blind trust was Cuwaert flung,  
 And Reynard's fastness entered he  
 Without a dream of treachery.  
 There lay Dame Ermelyne with her cublings,  
 Teaching them Reynard's shifts and doublings.  
 With joy her countenance now brightened,

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 Cuwaert's  
 sad fate.

XXI.  
Cuwaert's  
sad fate.

For of a load her heart was lightened,  
Inasmuch as the news had spread  
How Reynard was as good as dead ;  
And thus to see him now alive,  
Caused her sad spirits to revive.  
But when she spied his staff and scrip,  
Quoth she, " In holy fellowship  
Ye seem to be, my dearest love.  
Tell me, by all the saints above,  
Purpose ye thus to leave your home ?  
Or say why in this guise ye come."  
Quoth he : " Dear wife, I was arrested,  
And 'gainst me three foul knaves protested,  
But the King soon discharged me thence,  
Seeing my perfect innocence.  
Now must I go on pilgrimage,  
Leaving behind me as a pledge,  
Bruin and Isegrym in bond.  
Of me the King is grown so fond,  
That Cuwaert gave he to my will,  
To make a slave of or to kill ;  
For, said he, that this Hare accurst  
Was of all beasts the very first  
Against us both to make complaint,  
Saying such things of you, dear saint,  
As to repeat my tongue refuses,  
Our friendship grossly he abuses."  
When Cuwaert heard these words his fur  
Stood stiff with horror, but to stir  
He durst not, or he would have fled.

Reynard glared at him, but nought said,  
 And in two seconds he was dead,  
 His poor throat bitten right atwo,  
 And without any more ado,  
 Quoth the Fox, "Come, let's make a dinner  
 Of this well-fed but silly sinner :  
 Ne'er any man had better fare  
 Than a good, fat, and well-kept hare."  
 So made they a most jovial feast  
 Over this ill-used, ill-starred beast,  
 And to the winds all care did fling,  
 Tossing off pledges to the King  
 In bumpers of bright ruby wine,  
 Grown on the sunny banks of Rhine.  
 "Reynard," quoth Ermelyne, "Ye jape,  
 Tell, then, the truth of your escape ;  
 And how your foes ye overthrew,  
 Leaving them in their juice to stew."  
 "Dear dame," quoth he, "by flattering lie  
 And other deft chicanery,  
 So hoodwinked I the King and Queen,  
 As their affections quite to wean  
 From all the other beasts but me,  
 And now the world they only see,  
 If I *must* say it, just like asses,  
 Through such-like spectacles or glasses  
 As I provide with delectation  
 To make them view the situation.  
 Now when all this they come to know,  
 Our friendship mighty thin will grow ;

XXI.  
 Cuwaert's  
 sad fate.

XXI.  
Cuwaert's  
sad fate.

Angry he'll be as sore-eared bear,  
And at his hand I ill shall fare.  
Nor will fair words his anger check,  
But straight he'll hang me by the neck.  
Behoves it then that we depart  
Into the very deepest heart  
Of some thick forest, where that we  
May dwell in sweet security,  
Free from all dread or worrying fear,  
For many a long and pleasant year.  
Dear Dame, I'll bring thee to a wood  
Where meat is plentiful and good  
Of Woodcock, Partridge, and fat Pheasant,  
And sparkling brooks, with ripple pleasant,  
Where spotted trout in shallow pools  
May be whisked out, the silly fools ;  
They get there when the water's high,  
We catch them when it's all but dry.  
Good Lord ! how jollily we'll fare,  
'Neath spreading trees, in that sweet air !  
There, in calm rural pleasures bathed,  
The King we can elude unscathed.  
You see 'twas thus, he let me go  
Because I lied to him. Heigho !  
I put him off with such fine chaffing,  
I scarcely still can keep from laughing.  
I, with a tale of Krenkynpit  
Beguiled his Majesty's small wit ;  
Telling him that he there should find  
Treasure of such unheard-of kind,

That never yet the eye of man  
 Hath seen the like nor ever can.  
 Now when he finds that not one grain  
 Exists but in my fertile brain  
 Of all this wondrous heap of gold,  
 And that the tale I did unfold  
 Was but a fraudulent invention  
 To turn him from his kind intention,  
 That I should, like a ragman's doll,  
 Hang from a gallows, *sus. per coll.*,  
 Then, with his temper somewhat warm,  
 Depend on it he'll rave and storm.  
 But though he storm till he be dead,  
 What care I? He's a dunderhead!"  
 Quoth Ermelyde, "Dear Reynard, I  
 Like not this tale of vagary;  
 Though you abroad are used to roam,  
 Women love best their own dear home.  
 That wood ye speak of may be fair,  
 And birds and coneys plenty there,  
 And as ye tell, young hares and fish  
 Might furnish many a dainty dish,  
 But think ye well what joy one hath  
 In following every well-known path,  
 Familiar with each turn one goes,  
 Almost to know each wind that blows;  
 While among strange and unknown places  
 With doubt and fear the road one traces,  
 Each unaccustomed sound's alarming;  
 And, though the prospect may be charming,

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XXI.  
Cuwaert's  
sad fate.

I think we should much safer be  
Remaining here contentedly.  
Although our sovereign lord and liege,  
As he is called, should us besiege  
Within this stronghold, well we might  
With laugh and jest defy his spite.  
For know we not a thousand holes  
Where we may live as safe as moles ?  
Ken we not, too, each devious track  
Where he'd be sorely ta'en aback  
Were he to follow, and the cost  
Would be to him that he'd be lost,  
And pretty dance 'twould give his train  
To find and bring him home again.  
But of one thing I feel forlorn,  
More than aught else since I was born,  
It is that ye have sworn that oath  
Which for a time must part us both,  
If ye should travel o'er the sea  
I must remain in misery."  
"Ha, ha!" the Fox laughed out aloud,  
Then cried, "I feel quite vain and proud,  
To think by my wit duped has been  
My own sagacious Ermelyne.  
Ha, ha! for just once in my life,  
I've really taken in my wife."  
Quoth he, "Set nought thereby, dear Dame,  
Of broken oath have I small shame,  
If questioned, I should cry in scorn,  
'How more forsworn, how more forlorn.'

A worthy man said to me once,  
 And he by no means was a dunce,  
 How that 'A forced bydwongen oath,'  
 Pressed on, that is, to one who's loth,  
 'Hath morally no force at all,  
 Nor should the prick of conscience fall  
 On him who breaks it, for that he  
 Agreed to it but forcedly.'  
 I find the still small voice within  
 Ne'er gives me thus a twinge of sin,  
 'Tis a most conscience-easing course,  
 To take one's oath always by force.  
 This pilgrimage could not avail  
 To me the worth of a cat's tail,  
 Therefore, will I abide still here,  
 By your good counsel, Ermelyne dear,  
 And if the King for me should hunt,  
 From hole to hole we'll shift and shunt,  
 And in my sack of subtle wares  
 We'll find such curious gins and snares  
 That with one odd device or other  
 His gracious majesty we'll bother.  
 But if for harm he seeks and looks,  
 Harm shall he have by hooks or crooks."

XXI.  
 Cuwaert's  
 sad fate.

**N**OW while within this pleasant chat  
 Was going on, of this and that,  
 Bellyn the Ram outside abode,  
 And at length some impatience showed,  
 Crying aloud, in voice of Stentor,

XXI.  
Cuwaert's  
sad fate.

As being Cuwaert's guide and mentor,  
"Come out thence, in the devil's name!  
What! Cuwaert! Is it not a shame  
To keep me waiting here for you?  
Come out, and tell me what ye do."  
When Reynard heard this, out he came,  
Saying with voice subdued and tame,  
"Dear Bellyn, prithee calm thine ire.  
If Cuwaert doth thy patience tire,  
'Tis not a case of tittle-tattle,  
Nor yet of merely idle prattle,  
But he's engaged in consultation,  
About my excommunication,  
With his dear aunt, who well may be  
Fulfilled with deep anxiety."  
Quoth Bellyn, "Ye no more need say,  
That quite accounts for the delay."  
Quoth Reynard, "He'd not have you wait,  
But walk on at a gentle rate,  
He's very fleet of foot, you know,  
And makes nought of a mile or so.  
Therefore, if you will be so kind  
As walk on, while he stays behind  
To bid his aunt his last adieux,  
He very soon will be with you."  
Quoth Bellyn, "Surely Cuwaert cried,  
As though ill-luck did him betide,  
And he some help would have of me."  
Quoth Reynard, "Bellyn! what say ye?  
Think ye that any ill could come

To Cuwaert in my friendly home?  
 Now hearken ye that which befell;  
 When I began my wife to tell  
 Of my far journey, fell she straight  
 Into a swoon, and labour great  
 Had I and Cuwaert her to bring  
 From out that swoon, so did he sing,  
 'Help! Bellyn, help!' yet fear ye not  
 That he in danger was one jot,  
 Ye know that not the poorest mouse  
 Should suffer harm within my house.  
 And rather than that any blight  
 Therein should on dear Cuwaert light,  
 I'd see my wife and family  
 Perish and die eternally;  
 'Twould be indeed a sad fatality  
 Should you misdoubt my hospitality."

XXI.  
 Cuwaert's  
 sad fate.



XXII. HOW THE FOX SENT  
 THE HEAD OF CUART THE  
 HARE TO THE KING BY  
 THE HANDS OF BELLYN  
 THE RAM. ♡ · ♡ · ♡

**Q**UOTH Reynard, "Have ye not in mind  
 How the King straightly did me bind,  
 That I, ere I departed quite,  
 Should unto him two letters write?  
 Dear cousin, to the King, with care,  
 Prithee these two same letters bear,  
 Their consequence and import great

XXII.  
 Bellyn runs  
 post.

XXII.

Bellyn runs  
post.

I hardly can exaggerate,  
And scarce could I entrust them to  
Anyone in the world but you."  
Quoth Bellyn, "Surely knew I never  
That ye at writing were so clever,  
And for an envoy ye'd not lack,  
Had I but any sort of pack  
Which would a proper means afford  
Of carrying letters to our Lord."  
Quoth Reynard, "See then here the scrip  
That I from Bruin's back did strip,  
I prize it much, but willingly  
For such good use I'll lend it thee.  
Right welcome ye'll be to the King,  
When ye such great news to him bring."  
Quoth Bellyn, "Gladly I'll be bearer  
Of your good words, and so be sharer  
Of the King's royal grace and favour."  
Reynard looked than a judge much graver,  
And turned in quickly to his dwelling,  
His breast with high diversion swelling,  
To think with what adroitness he  
Played on the Ram's simplicity.  
Then in the scrip, all stark and dead,  
He neatly packed poor Cuwaert's head.  
Then hung it round stout Bellyn's neck,  
Who little thought what wretched wreck  
Of his dear friend he therein bore,  
With whom, but just an hour before,  
He'd travelled light and blithe and gay,

Merrily chatting on the way.  
 Quoth Reynard, "Haste now bravely on,  
 And stay ye not for stock nor stone.  
 And charge I you most strictly, never  
 To look within the scrip, or sever  
 The strings which tie it, for ye must  
 Remember 'tis a serious trust  
 Which now I give, and deviation  
 From orders would bring dire vexation,  
 And doubtless you remember that  
 Good old quotation, '*verb. sap. sat.*'  
 Would you the King's high favour gain,  
 Then should you unto him explain,  
 That you yourself this letter writ,  
 And did endite and counsel it.  
 So will he cry, 'Why, Bellyn, when  
 Gained ye such knowledge of the pen?'  
 And thus will have ye in his grace,  
 And give you some fat, well-paid place."  
 Thus he stout Bellyn did befool,  
 And had him for his willing tool.  
 Cried he, "Dear Reynard, how shall I  
 E'er thank ye for your courtesy?  
 No doubt I shall be greatly praised  
 By all the Court, and perchance raised  
 To be a clerk or something better,  
 When they think I can write a letter.  
 I've often noticed, dearest Fox,  
 That men with very slender stocks  
 Of wit and wisdom may get through

XXII.  
 Bellyn runs  
 post.

XXII.      This world as well as wise ones do  
Bellyn runs   If they but blow their trumpet loud,  
post.        For most part of the world's great crowd,  
             Will, without much consideration,  
             Take men at their own valuation.  
             But now, dear Reynard, how d'ye rede?  
             Shall Cuwaert with me forward speed?"  
             "Why no," quoth Reynard, "go he can't,  
             Till he's done talking with his aunt,  
             Besides, I must with him arrange  
             To learn some subtle things and strange."  
             Bellyn set off, and ran so fast,  
             That scarcely yet was midday past  
             When to the Court he came once more,  
             With prouder strut than e'er before.  
             Much marvelled then the King to see  
             He bore the bearskin scrip which he  
             But a short while before had given  
             To Reynard, seeking to be shriven  
             At Rome from excommunication.  
             Then asked he of the situation,  
             Crying, "Good Bellyn, whence d'ye come?  
             I thought that scrip had gone to Rome."  
             Quoth the Ram, "When my tale I tell,  
             I trust my lord ye'll like it well.  
             I went with Reynard on his road,  
             Halting awhile at his abode,  
             When, quoth he, 'Bellyn, will ye take  
             Two letters for King Nobel's sake?'  
             Quoth I, 'By all my hopes of heaven

I'll gladly take not two, but seven,  
If ye'll but give me off your hip,  
To carry them, that bearskin scrip.  
So gave he me this scrip, and it  
Holds letters written by my wit.  
Firstly, I taught him the enditing,  
And then the proper mode of writing,  
Reading them, you will say at once,  
'He who wrote this is sure no dunce.'"  
Then Bokart, the King's Secretary,  
A man well learned and literary,  
And justly well renowned, I ween,  
For that of tongues he knew fifteen,  
Was told to read the letters through.  
So then went Tybert to undo  
The scrip from off stout Bellyn's neck,  
And judge ye, what alarm and check  
It was to all their awe-struck eyes,  
When to their horror and surprise  
No letters found they, but instead,  
Poor Cuwaert's sanguinary head.  
"Alas!" cried out the King and Queen,  
"Most grossly we deceived have been."  
"I," cried the King, "astounded am  
That this was done by Bellyn Ram,  
But that this is his vile transgression,  
Is certain, by his own confession."  
Then hung he down his head and wept,  
And a long time dead silence kept,  
Then roared he with such fearful sound

XXII.  
Bellyn runs  
post.

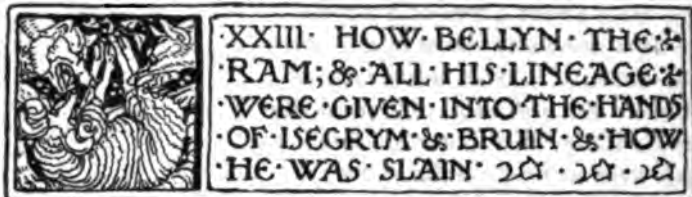
XXII.  
Bellyn runs  
post.

That it was heard for miles around,  
And some beasts fell down flat for fear,  
While others leapt six feet in air ;  
And each one feared his life to jeopard  
By coming near, except the Leopard.  
Sir Fira Peel, the Leopard hight,  
Black spotted he, on yellow bright,  
And near sib was he to the King.  
Quoth he, " Ye make the woods to ring  
With all this bellowing and noise ;  
Think ye thereby to counterpoise  
The wrong that Reynard hath ye wrought,  
Or bring thereby his wiles to nought ?  
Ye roar for all the world, I ween,  
As though that ye had lost your Queen !  
Wake up, and give the world relief  
From this unmitigated thief.  
Hold ye not all the world in hand,  
As Lord and ruler of this land ? "   
" Sir Fira Peel," the King replied,  
By no means can it be denied  
That this same rascal villain Fox  
Hath bearded me with japes and mocks,  
And outraged me at such a rate  
As my best friends to alienate.  
To face again I hardly dare  
My old-time friend good Bruin Bear,  
And hardly feel I in much trim  
To meet my old friend Isegrym.  
My noblest Barons I've ill treated,

And have been by the Fox defeated  
In all my best and noblest schemes,  
Through hearkening to his lying dreams  
And tales about a treasure which  
He says lies somewhere in a ditch.  
The cause of all this is my wife—  
These women are the plague of life.”  
Quoth Firapeel, “Ye gave quick ear,  
And were as ready quite, I fear,  
To listen, as was she to talk;  
But now if ye the Fox would baulk,  
At once without more words set free  
From out their bonds those prisoners three,  
Isegrym, Ersewyn, and Bruin,  
Whom ye have brought so nigh to ruin.  
To Bruin, for his loss of skin,  
Ye might present the false Bellyn,  
And Ersewyn and Isegrym  
Should of good right go shares with him,  
For cruel grief it was to lose  
From off their feet their natal shoes.  
This Bellyn Ram confessed that he  
Took part in the conspiracy,  
Consenting to poor Cuwaert’s death,  
’Tis just, therefore, he suffereth.  
Then forthwith in a body we  
Will take our way to Malperdy,  
And that foul beast within his nest,  
With strong hand, will straightway arrest.  
No more shall he escape the claw

XXII.  
Bellyn runs  
post.

XXII. And long arm of the outraged law,  
 Bellyn runs But with short trial shall be sent  
 post. To death, to all true men's content.

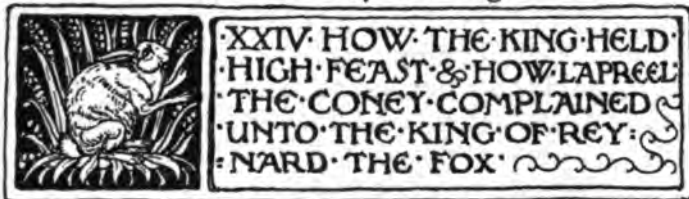


XXIII. The  
 Ram's  
 checkmate.

**C**RIED out the King, "I'll do it gladly,  
 For no beast e'er behaved so badly  
 As this vile wretch, whose gross deceit  
 Hath caused me in such guise to treat  
 Old friends like Isegrym and Bruin;  
 The prison where I put the two in  
 Seek ye at once, and set them free,  
 Making them full indemnity.  
 To them at once went Firapeel,  
 Their minds to calm, their wounds to heal.  
 Quoth he, "The King will make amends,  
 Treating you as his closest friends,  
 Your wounds he'll salve with precious ointment,  
 And give you each some good appointment.  
 Bellyn the Ram and all his kin  
 Shall henceforth be your power within  
 To harry, worry, kill and flay,  
 Until the coming of doomsday.  
 In fell, or wood, or plain, or field,  
 To you he doth their bodies yield,  
 To worry them by day and night,

And no beast shall dispute your right.  
 Also the Fox, and all his kind,  
 In whatso place place ye them may find,  
 Ye may destroy them at your pleasure,  
 Without restraint, or stint, or measure.”  
 Thus Firapeel the Leopard made  
 A peace for which poor Bellyn paid  
 Most dearly, for he lost his life,  
 And ever after grievous strife  
 Was waged against his kin and kith,  
 For one vain boast and foolish myth.  
 Yet so it is, one single blunder  
 Is oft excuse for years of plunder.  
 Then the King held a glorious Court,  
 Of Bellyn he nor cared nor thought,  
 But made twelve jovial feast-days fair,  
 To pacify the Wolf and Bear.  
 They kept it up with dance and song,  
 And no one found twelve days too long.

XXIII. The  
 Ram's  
 checkmate.



**T**IS told how to this glorious feast  
 Came every bird and every beast,  
 From the great Hippopotamus,  
 Down to the Mus ridiculus.  
 From east and west, from south and north,

XXIV. Joy  
 rules the  
 Host.

XXIV. Joy In all their glory came they forth,  
rules the And danced like mad upon the green,  
Host. So merrily as ne'er was seen.

1.

In the merry hove-dance  
See the Elephant prance  
As lissom and light as a fawn,  
While to minstrelsy sweet  
Twinkle thousands of feet  
From twilight till grey streaky dawn.

2.

The fireflies bright  
And the glowworms' soft light  
Outvied e'en the stars in the sky,  
While sparkled all eyes  
With such joy and surprise  
That they needed no light from on high.

3.

The Tiger and Cat  
Had a waltz with the rat,  
Round and round, till the two feeling thinner,  
Cried, "Why, who wants a third?"  
So the two, like a bird,  
Eat up the poor rat for their dinner.

4.

The Ape and the horse  
Grew quite friendly, of course,

The former the latter a-backing,  
And ostrich and pig  
Danced a right merry jig,  
Conversation be sure was not lacking.

XXIV. Joy  
rules the  
Host.

5.

Then a very old shark  
Asked a deer from the park  
If he'd join in a stately gavotte,  
While a little Bow-wow  
Made a horrible row,  
In the fear they should dance themselves hot.

6.

The Leopard and Lion  
Had both got an eye on  
The Cow, who was quite disengaged,  
And because she declined  
They indignantly dined .  
On her, though the Bull seemed enraged.

7.

A gay Armadille  
Danced a solemn quadrille  
With the Mole in his black velvet coat,  
While a very big Whale  
Stood straight up on his tail,  
And skipped round and round with a goat.

XXIV. Joy  
rules the  
Host.

8.

A young crocodile,  
Fresh arrived from the Nile,  
A hornpipe began with a sparrow,  
But his talk, though refined,  
Was not much to her mind,  
For his views seemed old-fashioned and narrow.

9.

An old cockatrice  
Learned to dance from some mice  
But soon getting tired and sleepy,  
They nibbled his tail,  
But it didn't avail,  
He but grunted "It feels rather creepy."

10.

The Blackbird and Thrush  
Sat up high on a bush,  
And sang till the light died away,  
Then the Nightingale took  
Up the song in a nook,  
And ne'er ceased till the dawning of day.

11.

I hardly need tell  
How at last it befell  
That the company all fell asleep,  
And till they awake  
Their full rest let them take,  
The end of my story will keep.

Of meat and drink the feast-hall flows,  
Or as Dan Chaucer saith, "it snows,"  
And merry plays in fancies quaint,  
To make or sinner laugh or saint,  
Are set forth for the delectation  
Of beasts of every rank and station,  
And glorious pageants and fair shows,  
While on the ear sweet music grows,  
Now soft yet clear, now loud and strong,  
So that each soul is borne along,  
And, all in time, ten thousand feet  
Unwittingly keep measured beat;  
So with the air the sweet sound mingles,  
That every ear with pleasure tingles;  
Yet such its soft, melodious touch,  
That none can deem the strain too much,  
But saddening when the tune is o'er,  
The ravished ear still craves for more.  
In these days we in vain may long  
For such great feast, and such sweet song.

XXIV. Joy  
rules the  
Host.

**B**UT when these triumphs well had lasted,  
And men their fill of pleasure tasted,  
About midday came Lapreel Coney,  
Looking quite scared, and all alone he  
Bowed down before the King and Queen,  
With gentle air and timid mien,  
And cried, with dolorous countenance,  
"List, Lord! while I my suit advance,  
Which is of outrage and distress,

XXIV. Joy  
rules the  
Host.

Done by the Fox's wickedness.

As I was travelling yester morrow,  
Passed I beside Malperdy burrow,  
There Reynard stood outside his door,  
In pilgrim's habit scant and poor ;  
So thought I to have passed him by,  
Saluting with civility.  
As I approached, he said his beads,  
As every pious pilgrim needs,  
So thought I, just the time of day  
I'll pass, as go I on my way.  
"Good day," quoth I, he nought replied,  
But as I passed him close beside  
Out went his foot, and such a crash  
I felt, as made my teeth to clash,  
And blinded me for just a twinkling ;  
Of whence it came I had strong inkling.  
So on the other side did shoot,  
And, being very light of foot,  
I forward sprang, and with good cause,  
Or I had not escaped his claws ;  
He grinned, as he were quite irate  
Because I had just saved my pate ;  
Not without reason had I fear,  
For see you, I have lost one ear,  
And in my head are four round holes,  
As big almost as barley boles,  
Struck through my skull with his sharp nails,  
And blood enough to fill four pails  
Such as the fairies use, flowed out,

But for my speed, I've not a doubt  
 In short space he had been my master,  
 But swift as he ran, I ran faster,  
 And here, great King, I show to you  
 The wounds, wherewith he would foredo  
 My little life; most gracious Lord,  
 Protection to me here afford,  
 And be the world's deliverer  
 From this foul thief and murderer;  
 For now can no man o'er the heath  
 Wend without mortal fear of death.  
 My Lord, it is too bad that he  
 Thus keeps our lives in jeopardy,  
 For so he brings your glorious rule  
 Into contempt and ridicule."

XXIV. Joy  
 rules the  
 Host.



XXV. HOW CORBANT THE  
 ROOK COMPLAINED ON THE  
 FOX FOR THE DEATH OF  
 SHARPBECKE HIS WIFE

**A**S Lapreel ended his complaint,  
 And sat down weary, worn, and faint,  
 Into the Court on sudden flew,  
 Before the King, a suppliant new.  
 Corbant the Rook, with piteous bearing,  
 Cried out, "Great King, I crave a hearing.  
 I and my wife, Sharpbecke, to play  
 Went on the heath but yesterday,  
 And there saw, lying on the ground,

XXV. The  
 Rook's great  
 woe.

XXV. The Reynard, who made nor stir nor sound,  
 Rook's great But lay as still as he were dead,  
 woc. His tongue down hanging from his head ;  
 Glassy and staring were his eyes,  
 In short, just as a dead hound lies,  
 So lay he. Then we moved about  
 And first walked in and then walked out  
 Between his legs, no harm suspecting,  
 But a good meal on him projecting.  
 Then went Sharpbecke to try his breath,  
 Laying her head close to his teeth,  
 When, in a moment, snap ! went he,  
 Biting her head off cruelly.  
 You see he waited but his time,  
 Just as bird-catchers watch their lime :  
 Then shrieked I out ' Ah ! welaway !  
 That I should live to see this day.'  
 But not one whit abashed seemed he,  
 But jumped up straight and ran at me.  
 Then cried I out, ' Harowe ! alas !  
 What grievous thing is come to pass !'  
 And though deep sorrow pierced me through,  
 On a tall tree forthwith I flew,  
 While he, without one spark of feeling,  
 Below stood, on my dear wife mealing.  
 I watched him how he slonked her in,  
 For my grief caring not one pin,  
 Of smallest bone he left behind  
 No single morsel, to remind  
 Me of our happy married life ;

A few tail feathers of my wife  
 Alone escaped, which here you see,  
 The rest he eat up hungrily.  
 In fact, of birds he seemed so fain,  
 I doubt not he'd have eaten twain,  
 And I had surely come in second,  
 Had I not his intention reckoned.  
 Off went he to his habitation,  
 While I, in greatest tribulation,  
 Gathered up these few poor remains  
 With bleeding heart and loving pains :  
 A suchlike danger I'd not see  
 For all the gold of Araby.  
 My Lord, see here this piteous work,  
 Wrought by this worse than heathen Turk.  
 Great King, if ye will worship have,  
 E'en so must ye your subjects save  
 From the attacks and depredation  
 Of the worst subject in the nation.  
 If your safe-conduct is thus broken,  
 How can we know, or by what token,  
 That in such deeds as I related,  
 Your barons are not implicated ?  
 For they who fight not against evil,  
 Are equal partners with the devil.

XXV. The  
 Rook's great  
 woe.



·XXVI HOW THE KING·  
·WAS WRATHFUL AT·  
·THESE COMPLAINTS·

XXVI. King  
Nobel raves.

**K**ING NOBEL with stern anger shook,  
Hearing the Coney and the Rook  
Pour forth their plaints and heavy grief  
Of what they'd suffered from this thief;  
This wastrel rascal, whose foul crimes  
He had o'erlooked a score of times.  
Now all the courtiers shook with fear,  
As glared his eye with glance severe,  
While like a bull he roared and brayed,  
Making the stoutest heart afraid;  
But the real author of the ill  
At home sat, quiet, calm, and still.  
At last the King in words broke out,  
Like thunder's boom, his angry shout,  
Crying, "This scoundrel I will trounce,  
Though he may think it nought but bounce;  
But this time swear I by my crown,  
And every sacred thing I own,  
And by the troth I owe my wife,  
And by my own most sacred life,  
That I will now pour down and wreak  
Upon this Fox's villain neck  
Such vengeance as was never yet  
In all the world beside e'er met.

I'll break, destroy, and rack and burn,  
The scoundrel inside out I'll turn,  
His wife I'll torture till she dies,  
And put out all his children's eyes ;  
The whole Fox race I'll hang and throttle,  
And with their blood I'll fill a bottle ;  
That he should make my subjects chafe  
To whom I've granted conduct safe,  
Is such a gross, unheard-of thing,  
I hardly seem to be a king.  
To think that his false flattering speech  
All my good sense should overreach,  
And when in bonds I had him tightly,  
To let him so deceive me lightly,  
Accepting straightway out of hand  
His tale about the Holy Land ;  
While he got never nearer Rome  
Than his own foul and thievish home ;  
Giving him pilgrim scrip and staff,  
While in his sleeve he did but laugh,  
Stuffing it all the while with flocks !  
I surely should have known the Fox.  
But ah ! I owe my bosom's strife  
To the ill counsel of my wife ;  
Alack ! it hath been said by many,  
No woman's rede is worth one penny,  
A rock 'tis on which thousands split,  
Fool that I was for listing it !"  
Now to the King it ne'er occurred  
He had not heeded the Queen's word

XXVI. King  
Nobel raves.

XXVI. King Had his will's pendulum not swung  
Nobel raves. To the same measure as her tongue.  
Then called he a full convocation  
Of all the wise ones of the nation,  
Which, as the King beforehand knew,  
Proved to consist of wondrous few,  
But as it seemed were quite enough,  
For when one spoke the rest cried "stuff,"  
And everyone who filled the rostrum,  
Did but propose a different nostrum  
For wiping out the burning shame  
That marred King Nobel's peace and fame;  
And so persistently they wrangled,  
And with such skill the matter tangled,  
That lastly the King stormed and raved,  
And so outrageously behaved,  
That all his courtiers felt quite scared,  
And to speak to him no one dared.  
At last the Queen cried, "What! d'ye blench?  
Why then I'll speak to him in French."  
And so began, "*Sire, je vous prie*——"  
Roared he, "How dare you speak to me  
In that absurd, outlandish tongue?  
One word more and I'll have you hung.  
Deem you that I am King of France?  
I'll lead you all a pretty dance,  
If you dare speak another word  
Of that same jargon that I heard.  
Madam, 'twas your advice irrational,  
That led to this disaster national,

'Twas you took Reynard's part, I trow,  
 And see what it has led to now."  
 Quoth she, with measured words and stately,  
 In clear-cut tones, and half irately,  
 "My Lord, I pray thee, is it just,  
 To speak as though ye had no lust  
 To win that precious hoard of gold  
 Whereof the Fox so glibly told?  
 When dost thou listen to my word  
 Except it with thy will accord?  
 Besides, my Lord, we know not yet  
 How much of credence we should set  
 On Lapreel's or on Corbant's story,  
 Both of them sound objurgatory,  
 Framed to revenge some old offences,  
 Made up, perhaps, of false pretences.  
 So give I my advice most hearty,  
 That first ye hear the other party,  
 '*Audi alteram partem*' is  
 A proverb writ in gold, ywis."  
 Then spake up bold Sir Firapeel,  
 Saying, "My Lord, all of us feel,  
 That wisdom governs the Queen's speech;  
 Thy power at any time can reach  
 The Fox; if all these tales prove true,  
 What then remains to hinder you  
 From carrying out your dread intent  
 Of Reynard's well-earned chastisement?  
 Well know we all how great your lust is  
 To deal out even-handed justice,

XXVI. King  
 Nobel raves.

XXVI. King And that ye labour day and night  
Nobel raves. To do toward all the thing that's right."  
Quoth Isegrym, "Sir Fira Peel,  
Ye fairly with the subject deal,  
And thereto are we all agreed,  
That each man his excuse should plead.  
But yet, though Reynard now stood here,  
And proved himself a saint, as clear  
As is the daylight to our eyes,  
'Twould be but by some new-forged lies,  
Of which he always has a store,  
Ready to back those told before.  
His tricks are countless as the sand,  
And I will bear you upon hand,  
That he more wicked deeds hath done  
Than any man 'neath heaven's sun.  
Now have I said, and will refrain  
From running o'er his crimes again,  
Till that he have yet one more chance  
Of proving his allegiance.  
Again I would remind you though,  
Of Krekynpit in Hulsterlo,  
And all the blatant lies he told  
Of unheard treasure, gems, and gold ;  
No greater falsehood e'er was spoken ;  
And hath he not his promise broken  
About his journey to the Pope ?  
My Lord ! my Lord ! a good strong rope  
Is the one thing to end our troubles,  
Trusting no more his lying bubbles.

Sir Firapeel, if you it pleaseth,  
And the King's justice it appeaseth  
To hear once more what Reynard saith,  
Why he be not condemned to death,  
By all that's sacred held, I pray,  
Why doth he not appear to-day?  
He hath received the royal command,  
And knows the law that rules the land,  
Let him come forth and plead his case,  
Or ne'er hereafter show his face.  
Let once more our great monarch fix  
The day to end his shifty tricks;  
No more, my Lord, with justice palter,  
Grant him the order of the halter."  
Then spoke the King in tone subdued:  
"No more this caitiff false and lewd  
Shall further summons have or warning,  
But seeing that he treats with scorning  
All that we say, or think, or do,  
Command now give I unto you  
Who own my sway and domination,  
That forthwith without hesitation  
Ye shall assemble one and all,  
Obedient to your liege's call,  
Within six days at very most,  
Gathering a formidable host,  
With guns, and bows, and flying standards,  
Archers, and men with heaviest bombards,  
And warriors of all sorts, that we  
May storm this house of Malperdy.

XXVI. King  
Nobel raves.

XXVI. King Say ye then, knights, say ye then, lords,  
Nobel raves. If this our plan your heart accords."

And with one voice they shouted back,  
"Of men and arms have ye no lack ;  
'Twill be delight without alloy  
This caitiff's castle to destroy ;  
The word give, and straightway we start  
In this good work to bear our part."



XXVII. HOW GRYMBERT THE  
DACHS WARNED REYNARD  
THAT THE KING WAS WROTH  
WITH HIM & WOULD SLAY HIM



XXVII.  
Grymbert's  
fears grow.

**A**LL these words sucked in Grymbert Dachs.  
Thought he, "Spare time there surely lacks ;  
Behoves it well, for Reynard's sake,  
Without delay my way to take  
Towards the stronghold of Malperdy,  
Would I avert a tragedy."  
So off he set with nimble limb,  
For brook or haw ne'er stayed he him ;  
And as he went the kindly elf  
Thus talked and communed with himself.  
"Ah! yes, dear eme, you're in sad plight,  
Fast tends your life towards dreary night ;  
Yet though I see small gleam of hope  
How we may with this trouble cope,  
I'll try once more your life to save  
From out the cold and darksome grave ;

For though thou hast some tortuous ways,  
 I'll give thee thy due meed of praise.  
 Oft hast thou round thy finger twirled,  
 With lies unmatched, the foolish world;  
 What other lives so sharp and quick  
 As thee, with pleasant quirk and trick?  
 Who else in the whole universe  
 Like thee can chapter give and verse,  
 To answer every accusation  
 That's brought against his reputation?  
 None! none! in history or fable!  
 Reynard, thou art inimitable.  
 If all the world were really good,  
 How should I get a livelihood?  
 Where else shall I see all my days  
 Any such charming wicked ways  
 As Reynard has brought into vogue?  
 Ah me! he is a merry rogue.  
 Should he e'er on a gallows toss,  
 'Twould be a serious public loss."  
 So moralized the Dachs as he  
 Hasted along towards Malperdy,  
 Where he his well-loved uncle found  
 With two young pigeons on the ground,  
 Which he had trapped in merry sport,  
 As they essayed with wings too short,  
 Just outside of their mother's nest,  
 Which of the two could fly the best;  
 And now he tossed them up on high,  
 Crying, "My dears, why don't you fly?"

XXVII.  
 Grymbert's  
 fears grow.

XXVII.  
Grymbert's  
fears grow.

Each time they fell they came down harder,  
Till they were fitted for his larder.  
Seeing with what haste Grymbert came,  
He stayed him in his merry game,  
And cried, "Ah! Grymbert, how d'ye do,  
My very best beloved nephew?  
Ye have been running fast, I see;  
What news bring ye to Malperdy?  
Have ye been on your road beset?  
I see you're running down with sweat;  
Walk in, I pray, you need repose,  
There's none more welcome, goodness knows."  
Cried Grymbert, "Oh! my uncle dearest,  
Things are more serious than thou fearest;  
Thy goods and life are in great peril,  
And I must own my wit quite sterile  
Of any means whereby to save  
Thee, my dear cme, from early grave.  
The King most horribly hath sworn  
To make my aunt a widow lorn,  
And hath commanded all the folk  
Who own themselves beneath his yoke  
Within six days they here assemble  
In such guise as doth make me tremble  
E'en to relate it, for in truth  
He seems to have cast off all ruth,  
And cometh here with guns and bombards,  
Such as are used among the Lombards,  
Horsemen and people in great wains,  
And soldiers in unending trains,

And torches and Greek fire they bring  
 Alight into your house to fling.  
 And Isegrym and Bruin Bear  
 Such friendship with the King now share,  
 E'en as exists 'twixt you and me ;  
 And they both boast with vengeful glee  
 That whatso thing they list to do  
 Forthwith the King agrees unto.  
 Now that which doth their wit employ  
 Above all things, is to destroy  
 And rase from off the earth all trace  
 Of foxes and their hated race.  
 Corbant the Rook, too, and the Coney,  
 Who used to boast you were his crony,  
 Have just now made a grievous plaint ;  
 Dear friend, I feel quite sick and faint  
 When I consider all the terrors  
 That threat you for a few slight errors."  
 "Puff," said the Fox ; "my dear nephew,  
 If I have nothing worse to rue  
 Than such small things as this doth make,  
 Easy then be ye for my sake.  
 Is this, then, all ye have to tell ?  
 My dear boy, I shall sleep as well  
 As e'er I did in all my life ;  
 Come in, it will amuse my wife  
 To hear the King's insensate babble,  
 And the wild storming of the rabble,  
 As much as any new romance ;  
 And for that matter, 'tis a chance

XXVII.  
 Grymbert's  
 fears grow.

XXVII.  
Grymbert's  
fears grow.

If any one be half so good ;  
Now swear I by the holy rood,  
I quite look forward to the fun  
Of all the risks I have to run.  
Ha! ha! 'twill be a pretty tangle  
To hear them storm, and rave, and jangle ;  
I will, to plague them, pretty dears,  
Set them together by the ears,  
And tell them all a tale so new,  
That once more they'll believe it's true.  
Without my help the Court thrives never,  
The King thinks that he's wondrous clever,  
But a fine mess it all would be  
Minus my wit and subtlety."



XXVIIJ · HOW · REYNARD ·  
CAME · ANOTHER · TIME ·  
TO · THE · COURT · ✱ · ✱ ·

XXVIII.  
The Fox  
all braves.

**T**HE Fox awhile appeared to be  
Absorbed in thought, and then quoth he,  
"Dear nephew, let all these things pass ;  
Walk in and take a friendly glass,  
And if it chimes with your religion,  
What say ye to a fat young pigeon ?  
For me, no meat I better love,  
'Tis fare for blessed saints above,  
And when I join the holy crew,  
Pigeons I hope will go there too.

Of all sweet food it is the best  
 For health, it doth so well digest.  
 To you, perhaps, it may seem droll,  
 But I oft swallow one down whole ;  
 Even its bones are full of blood,  
 Which makes it for digestion good.  
 As I grow old I often feel  
 I can't do with a heavy meal ;  
 And your dear aunt, too, in her state  
 Of health, needs something delicate.  
 Perhaps, on second thoughts, 'twere well  
 That nought unto your aunt you tell  
 Of all this threatened dire destruction,  
 Lest she might draw a wrong deduction.  
 She is sometimes a little nervous,  
 So reticence might better serve us ;  
 For if she should fall ill, you see,  
 'Twould cause me great anxiety.  
 To-morrow to the Court we'll start,  
 I, with a light and jovial heart,  
 Will set all matters straight and clear,  
 Of ending good have thou no fear.  
 Dear Grym, with glib and ready tongue,  
 I'll shortly sow such strife among  
 Those thick-head folks, that I shall be  
 Soon canonized for sanctity.  
 Dear nephew, if you only will  
 But comfort and support me still,  
 E'en as a man should stick by kin  
 In any case, through thick and thin,

XXVIII.  
 The Fox  
 all braves.

XXVIII.  
The Fox  
all braves.

Then doubt I not I shall pull through,  
And handsome guerdon make to you."  
Quoth Grymbert, drawing a long breath,  
"I'll serve you even unto death ;  
Yes, yes, we'll stick to one another  
Closer than brother unto brother ;  
Well know I when ye come to speech,  
Ye shall abash them all and each.  
Your enemies shall lose their labours  
While you're received with pipes and tabors ;  
Go to, I do not wish to boast,  
But 'twixt us, yet we'll rule the roast."  
Then broke they off their conversation,  
And went inside for relaxation.  
Grymbert aunt Ermelyne saluted,  
While she and her dear spouse disputed  
Which to him should show greatest sense  
Of friendliness and deference.  
" Pray sit down by the fire," quoth she :  
" Nay, on the settle here," quoth he ;  
While your aunt doth the pigeons cook,  
Look over this amusing book ;  
It tells all tricks played off on man  
By foxes since the world began.  
Now, my dear children, cease that noise,  
Your cousin hates uproarious boys.  
See, now the pigeons are all hot,  
I'm sorry I but two have got ;  
Had I your coming known before  
I'd have provided other four.

The pigeons stretched they out between them,  
Sure any body who had seen them  
Had laughed to note how each one eyed  
His neighbour, and how each one tried  
To make believe he'd had enough,  
Yet pigeon found such lickorish stuff,  
That each, besides what he had got,  
Had gladly eaten up the lot;  
Between the six I need not say  
There was not much to clear away.  
Then after dinner came the wine,  
Which was both plentiful and fine,  
And, being also pretty strong,  
Inspired friend Reynard with a song,  
Who, having drunk his twentieth glass,  
Broke forth, "*in vino veritas.*"

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The Fox  
all braves.

1.

Ever since I was born,  
I have felt bitter scorn  
For worthy respectable people;  
So with merry heart sing  
Here's a fig for the King;  
Nought care I for law, crown, or steeple.

2.

'Tis my honest belief,  
An industrious thief  
Is a blessing to all good society;  
To the humdrumming round,

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Wherein most men are bound,  
He furnishes pleasant variety.

3.  
At a good thumping lie  
No one better than I,  
And thus always I get out of trouble;  
And if one's not enough,  
I can tell *quantum suff.*,  
And explain all away like a bubble.

4.  
Suspicion and hate  
Lightly sit on my pate,  
As though they belonged to another;  
And when it doth suit,  
Though men call me a brute,  
They are ready to treat me as brother.

5.  
Then all the world through  
Care I not what I do,  
For ever I'm happy and jolly;  
And respectable men  
Will all envy me when  
I am laughing at them for their folly.

As ended he this moral strain,  
The Fox laughed till he cried again;  
Then quoth he, "Nephew, tell me true  
How like ye these dear children two?  
Which, with the babe on Ermelyne's knee,

Make up our little family.  
See Reynkyn here, my eldest son,  
Who learned to steal ere he could run,  
And there you see my darling Rosel,  
A truly promising young losel ;  
I think that when the world they face  
They'll do much honour to our race.  
It made the blood within me quicken  
To see how Reynkyn killed a chicken ;  
And Rosel too, a fine fat pullet  
Seized he so deftly by its gullet  
That in a moment 'twas as dead  
As though he had bit off its head.  
And I have seen them in the water  
'Mong ducks and lapwings make such slaughter  
As filled with joy my heart paternal ;  
And they'll begin their raids nocturnal  
As soon as I have taught them how  
The sight of traps and gryns to know,  
And from the hunters and the hounds  
To keep them well in safety's bounds.  
So learning little and by little,  
In time they'll bring us all our victual ;  
And of such meats as we now lack  
We then may gather a good stack.  
I'm pleased to think of their resembling  
Me in the great art of dissembling,  
Smiling, while in their heart bides hate,  
That art I always inculcate,  
As being most important for

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A thief or an ambassador.  
I've also taught them manner friendly,  
And that they speak most reverently,  
With cheerful look and merry smile,  
Albeit their heart is full of guile;  
Then, when their prey is unsuspecting,  
They seize that moment most auspicious,  
And, sudden as a bolt of thunder  
Or lightning, bite its throat asunder ;  
This always was the Fox's plan,  
Tell me a better if you can."  
Quoth Grym, " Though ye the world ransack  
Ye hither must at last come back  
Before ye find another pair  
Of children, such as Ermelyne bare  
To you, presenting you with these  
That sit on your paternal knees ;  
I really own I feel quite proud  
That I with them may be allowed  
Kinship to claim." Quoth Reynard, " You  
Must weary be and sleepy too,  
High time it is ye took your rest,  
Your aunt, too, is with sleep opprest,  
See here a litter of good straw,  
Which from the farmer's ricks we draw."  
So down upon their beds they lay,  
Sound sleeping till the dawn of day,  
Except the Fox, who sighed with sorrow,  
Heavily dreaming of the morrow.  
For though he bore it in good part,

He felt a quaver at the heart ;  
 And 'tis a little bit unnerving  
 When one knows well one's own deserving.  
 Reynard at dawn his castle roomed,  
 And doing so he somewhat gloomed,  
 For saying good-bye to one's wife,  
 In view of being tried for life,  
 Is not a cheerful sort of thing,  
 But doth somewhat one's spirit wring.  
 "Once more good-bye, dear Ermelyne,"  
 Quoth he, "I go to brave the spleen  
 Of odium and vituperation,  
 To say naught of insinuation,  
 With which mine enemies will seek  
 To get me hanged within a week.  
 That is, my dearest wife, in short,  
 I go with Grymbert to the Court,  
 And if my stay be somewhat long,  
 Have ye no fear that aught goes wrong ;  
 E'en should ye hear of tidings ill  
 Be sure there's nothing in it still,  
 For well ye know, it were a wonder  
 If I could not beat all folks yonder ;  
 In point of fact, one rather feels  
 Outwitting such mere imbeciles  
 Is somewhat apt to blunt one's senses,  
 It needs such very slight pretences.  
 But have care of your dearest self,  
 For if I'm laid upon the shelf,  
 There is but you, as well you know,

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To make our well-loved home to go ;  
For though our sons, as I believe,  
Will very early learn to thieve,  
Still we cannot expect them yet  
More than some minor things to get."  
" Alas ! dear Reyner," cried the dame,  
" Ye speak right well, yet all the same,  
I ne'er shall feel my soul at peace,  
Till that I hear of your release,  
And of your perfect vindication  
From every cruel accusation,  
Whereby is sought your condemnation."  
" You see," quoth he, " my dearest dame,  
This is to me a sort of game.  
The fact that wonderly the chance is,  
The pleasure of it much enhances,  
One weens sometimes a thing is so,  
And yet that thing one must forego ;  
And when one weens no thing at all,  
The thing unweened will straight befall ;  
This is a world of contradictions,  
Formed of few truths and many fictions.  
I'm bound now to the Court to go,  
But trust that in five days or so,  
Or e'en than that short time much less  
Thy form once more mine eyes will bless."  
Then off with Grymbert Court-ward went he,  
Trotting along as business meant he.  
But soon quoth he, " Dear Grym, I'm thinking  
Some of my crimes will not bear blinking.

Time since ye had on me compassion,  
 And shrove me in right holy fashion ;  
 I've done since then some rare shrewd turns  
 And for new shrift my conscience burns.  
 I earnest am for shrift of trespass  
 As one for drink who's bit by dipsas.  
 I gave the Bear a crafty grip,  
 When from his back I cut a scrip,  
 And hankering after some new shoes,  
 The Wolves I caused their own to lose,  
 And managed, too, the King's appeasing  
 With most unblushing bare-faced leasing,  
 While I arranged an artful snare,  
 Wherein to take the Wolf and Bear,  
 Persuading the good King that they  
 Against him made conspiracy.  
 And so was he right wroth with them,  
 Through my unholy stratagem ;  
 Though clear of crime as babe new christened,  
 Or Eve ere to the snake she listened.  
 Then rained I lies down thick as snow,  
 Of treasure hid at Hulsterlo ;  
 Though no such place did e'er exist,  
 A fact whereof full well I wist.  
 My sole excuse is, 'twas so funny  
 To see the King thus cute for money.  
 Bellyn and Cuwaert I with me  
 Led to my house at Malperdy,  
 And Cuwaert's head from body shorn  
 Was by the foolish Bellyn borne

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As gift, which I in scorn did fling,  
Before our gracious Lord the King.  
My heart, I fear, was somewhat stony,  
That time I treated Lapreel Coney  
To such a cuff between his ears  
As he will scarce forget for years,  
And had he not been swift as wind,  
His life he sure had left behind.  
Of the Rook's home I made a wreck,  
Eating his glossy wife, Sharpbecke;  
These now are all my latest crimes,  
But one belongs to former times,  
Which should have been by me confessed,  
When last I made to you clean breast.  
It pricks my conscience most acutely,  
So you shall hear it most minutely.

**A**S I with Isegrym was walking,  
And of indifferent matters talking,  
Between Houthulst and Elverding,  
We heard horse hoofs behind us ring,  
And, turning, saw a fine red Mare,  
Who a black Foal had in her care,  
A beast of two months old or so,  
Which fat on her rich milk did grow.  
Now Isegrym was mad with hunger,  
And so was I, but being younger,  
I better could support the craving,  
While he of his distress kept raving.  
Quoth he, 'Dear Reynard, prithee go

And ask that Mare to let us know  
 If she will sell her Foal that we  
 May make of it a banquet free.  
 Quoth I, 'That is a shaky task,  
 Still it can do no harm to ask ;  
 And if by chance it hap that she  
 Has mixed in high society,  
 There's little doubt they will have taught her,  
 She does no wrong to sell her daughter,  
 For that's a practice very rife  
 Among great people in high life.'  
 So walked I boldly to the Mare,  
 Saying, 'Dear madam, may I dare  
 To ask, though 'tis not for myself,  
 If you would sell your Foal for pelf ?'  
 'Oh, certainly ! why not, I pray ?  
 'Tis quite the fashion of the day,'  
 Quoth she, and then at once quoth I,  
 'Dear madam, 'tis my friend who'd buy,  
 If you will kindly name the price,  
 'Twill be decided in a trice.'  
 Quoth she, ''Tis on my hinder foot,  
 Written in figures black as soot,  
 So you may in a moment see  
 How much my child is worth to me ;  
 I guess ye be a learned clerk,  
 And will make nothing of such work.'  
 Then wist I well where she would have me,  
 And had the wit therefrom to save me.  
 So quoth I, 'Truly I'm no scholar,

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But merely a chance wayside stroller,  
Nor is it I would have your child,  
But Isegrym.' Thereat she smiled,  
And said, ' Pray let me see the buyer,  
The price to him will be no higher  
Than unto you, let him come nigh,  
And read the price, wills he to buy.'  
So off I ran to Isegrym,  
Saying, ' Now then, unto the brim  
May you your belly fill with Colt.'  
' Ha! ha!' quoth he, ' the whole I'll bolt  
In one good meal.' ' Stay, Isegrym,'  
Quoth I, ' the Mare has got a whim,  
That ye from off her foot should read  
The price, for which it is agreed  
That this fat Colt to you she'll sell,  
I think that ye can read quite well.'  
' Read,' quotha', ' say ye, what should let,  
In all my days ne'er met I yet  
Another man who better knew  
French, Latin, Dutch, and English too.  
I went to school at Oxenford,  
And learned as well as many a lord.  
Of doctors know I all the saws,  
And am well learned in the laws.  
Set what ye will before my eyes,  
However great or small the size,  
In way of writing, and so I  
Will read it straight off readily.  
Go I at once with willing speed,

The price from the Mare's foot to read,  
And having made the fat Colt mine,  
Forthwith will I fall to and dine.'  
Then bidding me thereby to tarry,  
He ran as fast as legs could carry  
Towards the Mare, and asked if she  
Would sell, and what the price would be.  
Quoth she, 'Tis not a great amount,  
And if ye will the figures count,  
Look well at my right foot and ye  
Shall mark them, plain as plain can be.'  
Quoth he, 'I beg thee let me read it.'  
Quoth she, 'I beg ye well to heed it.'  
With that she did her foot uplift,  
And he, perceiving not the drift,  
Poked in his nose behind her heels,  
And straightway such a stroke he feels,  
That seeming dead, flat down he falls  
As Jericho's historic walls,  
For the Mare wore stout iron shoes,  
Which surely no sane man would choose  
To risk his head near, were not he  
Induced by some extremity,  
Such as the hunger which just now  
Led on the Wolf, as ye may trow.  
A man full well a mile might ride,  
While the Wolf did as dead abide,  
And off the Mare and Foal light trotted,  
Leaving him there as one besotted,  
Till he awoke and raised his head,

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Howling as he would wake the dead.  
Then, e'en as I felt deep concern,  
And did for him with sorrow burn,  
Quoth I, 'Sir Isegrym, dear eme,  
'There's something wrong with you 'twould seem ;  
Did not the Foal with you agree ;  
Why gave ye then no part to me ?  
Pray have ye now your belly full ?  
Good heavens ! why what a face ye pull !  
Pray can ye tell me what was writ  
'Neath the Mare's foot, or part of it ?  
Pray was it verse or was it prose ?  
By heart ye have it, I suppose,  
Was it in rhyme or in blank verse ?  
I beg ye'll some few lines rehearse.  
I guess 'twas Cantus, for ye sang  
So high, the valley therewith rang.'  
'Ah ! Reynard ! Reynard !' then quoth he,  
'Most heartlessly ye mock at me.  
Pray ye give o'er that japing tone,  
My state might melt a heart of stone.  
I am sore hurt and hard beset,  
A friend might show some small regret.  
Alas ! that that long-legged quean  
I should by ill-luck e'er have seen ;  
Within her iron shoe were pricked  
Six cruel nails, wherewith she kicked  
My wretched head enough to cleave it,  
Ah ! Reynard, ye will scarce believe it,  
Each nail I took to be a letter,

Most foully made of me its debtor,  
 For to each hard-wrought nail I owe  
 A wound that here has laid me low.  
 Never again shall I have need  
 Letters of such a sort to read.'  
 Quoth I, in tone of great surprise,  
 'This is some tale that ye devise !  
 It cannot be a clerk like you  
 Would reading of six letters rue,  
 For sure but now I heard ye tell  
 That six tongues ye could read right well.  
 And said ye not with righteous cause  
 That ye knew sciences and laws ?  
 Is it then true, as I have read,  
 That learning oft makes weak the head ?  
 And knowing all that's taught in schools,  
 Men yet may be most learned fools ?'  
 Dear eme, no more I need to say,  
 How Isegrym I led astray,  
 I shan't forget till my last breath,  
 How near I brought him to his death.  
 Of course 'twas very wrong I know,  
 But Lord ! it did amuse me so.  
 Thus, nephew, have you full confession  
 Both of my new and old transgression,  
 And I feel quieter in mind  
 Now all my sins are left behind.  
 What way they'll take these things at Court,  
 Though I but did them all in sport,  
 I don't quite know, but you may still

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Put on such penance as ye will,  
And my soul thus from sin made clear,  
I need not for the future fear,  
E'en though the deeming of the King  
The last sad penalty should bring."  
Quoth Grym, "Your trespass hath been great,  
But as the proverb old doth state,  
'The man who one time dead doth lie,  
For ever dead must he aby,'  
And what is bygone, bygone we  
For ever must allow to be.  
So matters it but little whether  
Your sins I pardon altogether,  
Or else some penance I exact,  
Like reading a religious tract,  
Or other horrible infliction,  
Such as the study of dull fiction :  
And coming to the Court I wot,  
Ye'll meet a welcome somewhat hot ;  
Especially about that matter  
Of Cuwaert's head, ye'll need to patter  
Some most ingenious well wrought tale,  
And that will be of small avail,  
Unless ye can explain also  
Those lies ye told of Hulsterlo,  
And all that wondrous buried treasure,  
Whereat the King's wrath knows no measure ;  
Of course it may in time blow over,  
But just now ye'll not live in clover."  
Quoth Reynard, "Nephew, how ye talk !

As through the world our ways we walk,  
 This thing to hear, and that to see,  
 And in affairs concerned to be,  
 Tell me, how can it e'er be done  
 By any man 'neath heaven's sun,  
 His life to live so sweet and mild  
 That touching pitch he's not defiled?  
 Or handling honey, should not lick  
 The sweets that to his fingers stick?  
 My tender conscience pricks me ever  
 My way of life from sin to sever,  
 Living as straightly as I can,  
 Like a good monk or clergyman;  
 Remembering all the holy saws,  
 And holding strictly by God's laws,  
 Loving my neighbour as myself,  
 And scorning all unholy pelf.  
 But ween ye well, the soul within  
 May strive and struggle against sin,  
 Yet doth the worldly outward will  
 To vanity incline one still.  
 Alack! when in my holy fits,  
 I feel as though I'd lost my wits,  
 And time doth seem most weary long,  
 Unless I'm doing something wrong.  
 A holy life I'm always choosing,  
 But rascal ways find more amusing.  
 Just now the christian virtues seven  
 I'd practise, making straight for heaven,  
 My sins I've left, my aspiration

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Is all for holy contemplation.  
I feel a highly moral tone  
So long as I live quite alone,  
But when I go forth in the world,  
Then all at once I find me whirled  
Into a maze of evil living,  
Where loose-lived priests and prelates, giving  
To those about them bad example,  
Teach all the world on good to trample,  
And sure 'tis, show of evil deeds,  
In short time other evil breeds.  
So mixing in the world I lose  
The good thoughts that my heart would choose.  
Prelates and curates sing and laugh,  
Great feasts they make, rich wines they quaff,  
Practising every kind of folly,  
Nought thinking of, but making jolly,  
And then into the pulpit going,  
I own, their conning and their proing  
With how they do, and what they say  
Hath taught me to believe that they  
Know well how to deceive and lie,  
Dear Grym, as well as you and I.  
Men lie most wonderly at Court.  
Lords, ladies, priest and clerks, in short,  
It seems to me so free a custom  
There's small risk they'll in lying rust 'em.  
He who would tell great lords the truth  
Were truly an ingenuous youth,  
But small thanks would he get therefore,

Slammed in his face would be each door.  
 Dear nephew, would men be well placed,  
 Alack! they must be double-faced;  
 Here must they wheedle, coax, and flatter,  
 And there, in otherwise must chatter,  
 Praise this man on his weaker side,  
 And then the self-same man deride,  
 A lie in fairest guise bewimple,  
 And then laugh at that man for simple  
 Who your fair lying takes for true,  
 Putting his honest trust in you.  
 He who can subtly tell a crammer,  
 Yet boldly speak without a stammer,  
 Some lucrative fat post may seize,  
 Beclad in scarlet robes and gryse,  
 Whether he wills the church to grace,  
 Or in the state to hold high place.  
 But know ye, who would thus aspire,  
 Must be a bold unblushing liar,  
 Yet careful of each little art  
 By which to play his devious part.  
 But never let a weakling fool  
 Try practice in this dangerous school.  
 A liar should be wondrous clever,  
 For once he's lost he's lost for ever."  
 Quoth Grymbert, "What shall hinder you  
 From doing all ye will to do?  
 All the world's ways you're deeply versed in,  
 And subtlest reasoning have been nursed in.  
 Small need pardee! have ye of shrift,

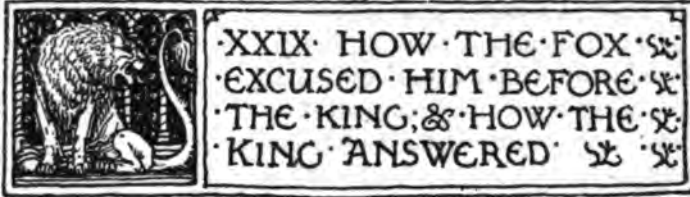
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Of every turn ye know the drift,  
Let those who long to go to heaven  
Have care that they of thee be shriven."  
As thus they wended, deep in talking,  
They reached the Court with leisure walking,  
But when thereto anigh they came,  
Reynard felt qualms right through his frame,  
Yet bare it with a ruffling air,  
As he would say, "The devil may care."  
So came they unto where the King  
Sat with his Court around in ring.  
Then Grymbert, whisp'ring Reynard, said,  
"Keep ye good heart, hold up your head,  
Fear ye no thing these angry elves,  
'The gods help those who help themselves.'  
Perchance the proverb may come clear,  
'One day's oft better than a year.'"  
Quoth Reynard, "Thanks, ye comfort well,  
Your helpful words my terrors quell,  
And lift my soul from nether hell."  
Then looked he forth, as who should say,  
"What will ye with me here this day?"  
Anear him, of his kin there stood  
Some few who owed him little good,  
Such as the Otter and the Beaver,  
And other some, whose absence liever  
He would have noted, if that he  
Might have arranged the company.  
And some there were who backed him still,  
Though now his fortunes looked but ill.

Arose a sound like hum of bees  
 As fell the Fox upon his knees,  
 And cried, "Great King, for old days' sake  
 Hear ye me," and thus forth he spake.

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**M**AY God, who knows all things that hap,  
 And whose might doth the world enwrap,  
 Save you, Great King, and you, dear Queen,

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 Fox speaks  
 fair.

Granting that right and wrong between  
 Ye judge unerringly, that so  
 As all men your stern justice know,  
 They likewise may your wisdom praise  
 Which lights the world like morning's rays."  
 So spake the Fox, and somewhat flat  
 His flattery seemed to fall, but that  
 Did not abash him, though he quivered,  
 And somewhat in his shoes he shivered.  
 Quoth he again, "My lord, I would  
 That heaven marked out the ill and good,  
 And clearly on each forehead writ  
 What each head holds of evil wit.  
 Then, my lord, would ye clearly see  
 What love for you there is in me,  
 And knew ye all that I well know,  
 Then would your love and wonder grow

XXIX. The At the great pains with which I've striven  
Fox speaks To serve ye, and before high heaven  
fair. My name would stand as pure and bright  
As the clear beams that chase dull night.  
My Lord, I counsel you, refuse  
To hear the tales of those ill shrews  
Who basely would befoul my name,  
And bring upon me lasting shame.  
Beware, my Lord, of flattering tongues,  
Which oftentimes work unheard-of wrongs;  
And list the words of truth and verity,  
Which flow from me in all sincerity.  
Harowe! I cry on that vile crew  
Which lately hath got ear of you.  
But well I know, great Lord and Lady,  
Your wit is not so dull and shady  
That ye give credence to such lies  
As must but cause ye to despise  
The foul-mouthed traitors, whose base end  
Is to destroy your closest friend.  
But being honest, just, and true,  
The upshot ne'er can bring me rue.  
Great King, who now is guilty proved,  
E'en though it be the best beloved  
Of all your friends, yet spare him not,  
But let his name bear brand and blot,  
And let his hateful memory be  
Damned unto all eternity.  
Ere from the Court once more I go,  
Plainly and truly shall men know,

How much I scorn base-hearted flattery,  
Their robe of lies I'll make all tattery,  
While my most secret soul unfurled,  
Shall show snow-white 'fore all the world."  
Dead silence reigned throughout the place,  
While the Fox stood with pious face,  
Looking so mild you'd think forsooth,  
His words were good as gospel truth.  
And folk, while he looked so devoutly,  
Much marvelled that he spoke so stoutly.  
Spake forth the King, "No, Reynard, no,  
Again ye'll not deceive us so,  
Think not your misdeeds to repair  
By new-coined lies and speeches fair.  
These words shall gain ye no more help  
Than doth a vile cur's servile yelp  
Save him from crack of huntsman's whip.  
Ye think no doubt once more to slip  
Your neck from out the hangman's noose,  
By this fine plausible excuse,  
But no, this day must ye be hung,  
And I will see your dirge is sung.  
What hearty love for us ye feel,  
Have ye shown forth on poor Lapreel,  
And I should have great blame to brook  
Such deed as yours towards Corbant Rook.  
Know ye not what the pot befel  
That went too often to the well?  
So know ye, Reynard, by this token  
That this time shall your pot be broken."

XXIX. The  
Fox speaks  
fair.

XXIX. The When Reynard heard these words, his heart  
Fox speaks Went pit-pat, and the sweat did start  
fair. From out his skin at every pore,  
As the King harped on the old score.  
And thought he, "Still must I pull through  
With lies, there is nought else to do."  
So plucking up his courage, cried,  
"Most gracious Lord, although I died,  
I prithee hear the matter quit,  
Then deem ye as ye will of it.  
Though that ye send me to the death,  
Yet will I with my latest breath  
Still utter prayers for you and yours.  
My foes stand round by threes and fours,  
While here, alas! alone am I  
To combat all their villainy.  
Surely mere justice you affords  
Reason to hear out all my words.  
In times gone by, advice ye had  
From me, which ne'er ye counted bad,  
And ever I your part have taken,  
When ye by others were forsaken.  
And doth it not to me belong,  
When evil beasts have done me wrong,  
That I to thee may show my grievance,  
And thereby gain from thee retrievance?  
In happy days now worn and past,  
Were you and I firm friends and fast;  
Ah! then, as brother heareth brother,  
Ye'd hear me before any other;

And now, though times are changed most sadly,  
Think ye not ye would treat me badly  
If ye refused my plaint to hear,  
Whereby I trust my fame to clear?  
I see men of my kin stand by,  
With doubtful look and timorous eye;  
Yet would they sore resent if ye  
Should now deal with me wrongfully;  
And should ye me to vile death send,  
Ye lose the best and truest friend  
That ever strengthened up your hands,  
Gaining ye glory in all lands.  
Sir King, bethink ye yet once more,  
Had I offended ye so sore,  
Should I my neck thus jeopardise,  
Coming in midst of enemies?  
No, not for all the ruddy gold  
That could in the wide world be told,  
For was I not at large, and free  
To roam unchecked o'er land and sea?  
But, heaven be thanked, I'm free from crime,  
No foulness doth my life begrime,  
My mind is pure, my soul is clear,  
As yon transparent glassy mere.  
With heart as firm as rock, ay, firmer,  
Prepared to answer every murmur.  
Now shall ye learn at my own hands,  
Of surety how this matter stands.  
At home in peace was I abiding,  
When Grymbert comes with this strange tiding,

XXIX. The  
Fox speaks  
fair.

XXIX. The About the Coney and the Rook,  
 Fox speaks And what offence thereat ye took ;  
 fair. And when he all at full related,  
 I own I felt exasperated.  
 I hither leapt, I thither sprang,  
 The doors I banged, the bells I rang;  
 And after a mild sort of fashion,  
 I frankly own was in a passion.  
 But was it not a little riling,  
 To hear this infamous reviling ?  
 At last I strolled out on the heath,  
 Of pure fresh air to get a breath,  
 And somewhat to allay my feelings,  
 Ruffled by such nefarious dealings.  
 There met I with the Ape Meryne,  
 My uncle, whom I had not seen  
 Since he had come to good estate,  
 As Bishop Cameryk's advocate.  
 Now many among the clergy be,  
 In wisdom, much worse found than he,  
 And seeing me in sore distress,  
 Would know wherefore my heaviness.  
 ' I see,' quoth he, ' some heavy dole  
 Doth trouble and afflict your soul. •  
 Tell me forthright what thing thee aileth,  
 For seldom 'tis my counsel faileth,  
 And willingly my ear I'll lend  
 To you my well-loved foretime friend.  
 Well know I that it sometimes haps,  
 Some threatened woe a man's life caps

So that he feels enmeshed in trouble,  
 By what is truly but a bubble,  
 Letting it master his inwit,  
 When he, by boldly facing it,  
 Could put his foemen to the rout,  
 And turn the matter inside out.  
 'Dear eme,' quoth I, 'that is well said,  
 The nail ye've hit upon the head,  
 The very state whereof ye tell,  
 Is that which drags my soul to hell.  
 'Tis a false villain accusation,  
 That keeps my mind in perturbation.  
 One drives me to the bitter end,  
 To whom I've been a loving friend.  
 Alas! it is Lapreel the Coney,  
 My old-time sib, my ancient crony.  
 But yester morning came he where  
 I sat, and said my matin prayer,  
 And gave me morning salutation,  
 Which I returned with iteration.  
 Quoth he, 'Dear friend, I am so weary,  
 And hunger maketh life so dreary,  
 That scarce my limbs my frame support,  
 Taking my journey towards the Court.  
 In truth I am wellnigh dead beat,  
 Have ye, I prithee, any meat?'  
 'Enough, and yet to spare,' I said,  
 'Come in and feast on manchet bread,  
 So may ye, too, sweet butter taste.'  
 'Twas Wednesday, and I kept the fast,

XXIX. The  
 Fox speaks  
 fair.

XXIX. The For to avoid the devil's mesh,  
 Fox speaks On Wednesday touch I never flesh,  
 fair. And fasted I also beside,  
 Nearing the Feast of Whitsuntide,  
 For they who overest wisdom love,  
 Fixing their souls on joys above,  
 Must fast against the festals high,  
 ' *Et vos estote parati.*'  
 Lapreel's fierce hunger I appeased,  
 And therewith seemed his soul well eased ;  
 But when his bellyful he'd eaten  
 Of butter sweet, with manchet wheaten,  
 Comes my dear son, my little Rosel,  
 Seeking for any odd stray morsel,  
 For children ever, day and night,  
 Enjoy a wondrous appetite ;  
 Then as the dear child munched the chips,  
 The Coney smote him on the lips,  
 So that he broke his pretty teeth,  
 And flat he fell upon the heath  
 In half a swoon. When Reynkyn saw,  
 This outrage upon nature's law,  
 He sprang upon the Coney straight,  
 And forthwith had bit off his pate,  
 Had I not run unto the rescue,  
 Just turning my dear boy askew,  
 And e'en chastised the child therefor,  
 Though grieved the while to my heart's core.  
 Now ye might think, perhaps, Lapreel  
 Some spark of gratitude would feel ;

But no, the heart of this same Coney  
 Is so malignant, base, and stony,  
 That forthwith scuds he to the King,  
 Basely distorting the whole thing.  
 Cousin, herein was I to blame?  
 At whose door, ask I, lies the shame?  
 He brings false tales all piping hot,  
 I suffer wrong, complaining not.  
 And then came Corbant Rook a-flying,  
 With horrid croak as he were dying,  
 I asked what ailed in civil terms,  
 'Alas!' quoth he, 'Diet of Worms,  
 Which she most punctually attended,  
 Most grievously the life hath ended  
 Of my dear wife, my loved Sharpbecke,  
 Putting on this world's joys sad check.  
 Surely my first thought was that she  
 Had been judged for some loselry,  
 And by command of Holy Diet,  
 Her peevish caw was ever quiet.  
 Till he explained that over-feeding  
 Was the true cause of her deceding,  
 Eating so many worms that they  
 Bit her throat through but yesterday.  
 Then I thereat much marvelling,  
 Begged he'd explain this wondrous thing;  
 But off he flew without a word,  
 And next I hear this evil bird,  
 Unto my horror, grief, and pain,  
 Declares 'tis I his wife have slain.

XXIX. The  
 Fox speaks  
 fair.

XXIX. The Now wit ye, while on earth I creep,  
 Fox speaks A rook flies through the heaven's steep,  
 fair. And could no more be caught by me  
 Than fishes swimming in the sea.  
 Such lies almost my patience tire,  
 For how could I e'er come anigh her?  
 To an ill life it seems I'm bound,  
 I'd better have been born a hound.  
 Perchance my penance here begins,  
 And I'm thus troubled for old sins.  
 Were such the case I'd be content  
 To suffer it howe'er it went.'  
 Quoth the Ape, 'My advice is clear,  
 At Court before the King appear,  
 Tell there your plain, unvarnished tale,  
 Your innocence must sure avail,  
 And thus ye will be quit and free  
 Of this most heinous calumny,  
 When once is heard your truthful version  
 Against this infamous aspersion.'  
 'Alas!' quoth I, 'that may not be,  
 For the archdeacon hath put me  
 In the Pope's curse, and there I lie,  
 Writhing beneath it cruelly,  
 All through ungrateful Isegrym,  
 Who grievously lamented him  
 Of the straight life and scanty fare  
 'Neath which he laboured at Elmare,  
 Where he as monk had been professed,  
 But only for his jaws found rest.

The long prayers coupled with long fasting.  
And singing hymns for everlasting,  
He found by no means to his taste,  
And begged I would his freedom haste.  
'Such life,' cried he, 'I can't abye,  
Or doing so must surely die.'  
I, pitying his sad condition,  
Advised him, to my own perdition,  
He should cast off the monkish habit.  
So does he, and at once doth blab it,  
That he but followed my advice.  
Think you now that was kind or nice?  
But more, since then his aim hath been  
To mar me with the King and Queen,  
And I believe, without a pang,  
He'd see his benefactor hang.  
Of trials there are none more rude,  
Dear eme, than base ingratitude;  
So see you, I must leave my home,  
And travel painfully to Rome,  
For my poor soul's complete ablution  
By means of papal absolution.  
Bethink ye of my bosom's strife,  
Leaving my children and my wife  
To suffer the cold world's disdain,  
Outrage, and contumely, and pain,  
And small indignities and spites  
Wherewith a cruel world requites  
A man who his whole life hath spent  
In striving for its betterment,

XXIX. The  
Fox speaks  
fair.

XXIX. The While I am helpless to defend them,  
 Fox speaks How will these villains spurn and rend them,  
 fair. And till I free me of this curse,  
 Things must go on from bad to worse.  
 I dare not show myself at Court,  
 Lest I be made the jest and sport  
 Of those who know the wretched state  
 Of a poor excommunicate,  
 And much I fear lest on me lie  
 The Church's curse until I die,  
 And yielding up my last breath so  
 I into nether hell should go.'  
 Quoth then my cousin, ' Fear ye not,  
 Deeply I feel for thy hard lot ;  
 But trust unto my skill thy case,  
 And thou shalt all thy foes outface.  
 At Rome I know my way about,  
 With every turning in and out ;  
 Martin, the Bishop's clerk, am I,  
 Deep versed in every subtlety.  
 And there I am as much at home  
 As is the very Pope of Rome.  
 I first shall the Archdeacon cite,  
 Showing a plea against his right,  
 And then in time shall get for you  
 An absolution full and true,  
 For know I every wile and art,  
 Which in such work must bear its part.  
 At Rome, too, dwells my cousin Symon,  
 As skilled is he in putting lime on

Spiritual twigs to catch men's souls,  
As fowler, who limes twigs for fowls ;  
And whoso amply oils his palm  
Shall have sweet absolution's balm ;  
And to his soul he'll give contentment,  
Though he lay 'neath the Pope's resentment.  
Then I've two friends, Wayscathe and Takeall,  
On their aid may ye safely stake all ;  
Who with full purse their friendship buys,  
Makes them fast friends and sure allies.  
Ever with money right goes forth,  
And well-paid suit hath money's worth.  
A true friend for his friend will die,  
And, Reynard, ye shall find that I,  
Being well paid, will be such friend  
As to your prayer shall bring good end.  
Coming then to the Papal Court,  
And wishing for good lot and sort,  
So seek ye my wife Rukenawe,  
Well knows she how to steer the law  
As it doth best her interest suit ;  
For the main chance she's most acute.  
And she besides has sisters two,  
Who ever find some juggle new,  
Wherewith to help a wealthy client,  
And of mere justice are defiant.  
My children three of certain age,  
And others of our lineage  
Dwell also there, I make no doubt  
In all your schemes they'll help you out,

XXIX. The  
Fox speaks  
fair.

XXIX. The They always give a hearty welcome  
Fox speaks To those whose needs augment their income.  
fair. Ply well my wife, for I have taught her  
That blood much thicker flows than water,  
And her most ready ear she lends  
Unto her lineage and friends.  
And should ye not come by your right,  
Then let me know, and day or night  
I ne'er will rest till that your foe  
The curses of the Church doth know.  
Nay, should it be a sovereign king  
Fierce trouble on his land I'll bring,  
And on his whole realm will inflict  
The Holy Father's interdict,  
So that no man dare sing nor read  
Within the church, nor say the creed,  
Nor christening make, nor sing the psalter,  
Nor minister before the altar.  
Nor e'en when death doth men befal,  
Shall they have Christian burial.  
Cousin, ye see the Pope is old,  
And 'tis the Cardinal of Gold  
That ordereth all things for him,  
He's young of heart and lithe of limb,  
And hath a niece through whom I can  
Work wonders with the holy man,  
For she is my niece, too, ye see,  
And ever willeth good to me.'

**M**Y Lord, when this strange tale I heard,  
Joy, I must own, within me stirred ;  
And merrily my spirit laughed

At all this jugglery and craft ;  
Hither at once I gladly came,  
To make you witting of the same,  
As I had heard it ; if there be  
Any man who can gainsay me,  
Or in my tale can find some flaw  
Or doubt, according to the law,  
Then let him set me day and field,  
And we will each our weapons wield  
In mortal combat, understood  
He be of birth and worthyhood  
E'en as myself, and so shall we  
Settle the dispute finally ;  
And he who comes off best in fight  
All men must deem he hath the right.  
Great King, the right is ever strong,  
Justice and truth do no man wrong."  
Then all the beasts stood still and mum,  
Except there rose a murmuring hum,  
That seemed to augur approbation  
Of Reynard's masterly oration.  
Laprael the Coney, and the Rook,  
Themselves unto the fields betook,  
Away from the assembly sneaking,  
Without so much as one word speaking,  
But in the free and open plain  
Quickly they both found voice again,

XXIX. The  
Fox speaks  
fair.

XXIX. The Crying, "God grant this murderer fell  
Fox speaks May quench his wicked soul in hell;  
fair. Well knows he lies in words to wrap,  
And with false tales to lay such trap,  
That all his frauds have gospel seeming,  
While new deceits he's ever dreaming.  
But yet, to mar this rascal business,  
Where can we find sufficient witness?  
'Tis better that at once we sheer off,  
Thus from the tangle getting clear off,  
Than that we hold a field and fight him,  
When he with some new trick may right him,  
And we shall be but laughing stocks  
To the well-wishers of the Fox.  
True he's but one, while we are five,  
But he'd beat any ten alive."  
Then Isegrym and Bruin Bear,  
Felt that in evil plight they were,  
When thus they saw these two forsake them,  
And to the distant fields betake them,  
For none besides the Rook and Coney,  
Could they count on for testimony  
As to the frauds, deceits, and tricks  
With which they hoped the Fox to fix.  
Then spoke the King with voice austere,  
"Let those come forth, and have no fear,  
Who can gainsay this wondrous tale,  
If none, then must the Fox prevail  
Against those who declare that he  
Is steeped in lies and villainy.

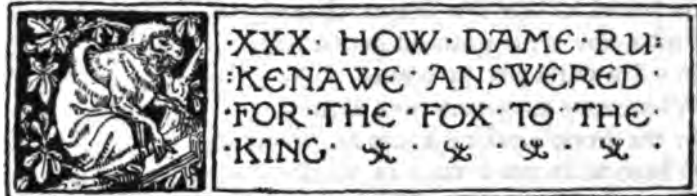
An hour ago there were a score,  
 But now I see them here no more,  
 What can I understand thereby  
 But that the Fox speaks truthfully? ”  
 Quoth Reynard, “ This, my lord, is shocking,  
 Of truth and justice ’tis but mocking ;  
 Behold now, how behind my back,  
 They bring forth charges by the sack ;  
 On my devoted head you see  
 How they pile up the agony ;  
 But when I once put in my answers,  
 Proving ’tis they who are romancers,  
 Hey presto ; all at once they’re gone  
 And I’m left standing here alone.  
 Where’s now that false and mean Lapreel,  
 Who made such pitiful appeal ?  
 Where’s Corbant, who with angry caw  
 Against me would invoke the law ?  
 When now I ask for confirmation  
 Of their astounding accusation,  
 Instead of honestly responding,  
 They refuge take in base abconding,  
 Thus most unjustly leaving me  
 Loaded with their vile calumny.  
 Yet, my lord, willed they to be shriven,  
 Piously making peace with heaven,  
 So would I all my wrongs forgive,  
 And with them in sweet concord live,  
 For never in my heart do I  
 Bear rancour, spite, or enmity ;

XXIX. The  
 Fox speaks  
 fair.

XXIX. The With all men would I dwell in love,  
Fox speaks And vengeance leave to Heaven above."  
fair. Quoth the King, "Reynard, though ye be  
Now speaking fair and plausibly,  
I'm not so sure your heart doth go  
With the fair seeming that ye show.  
Not yet wiped out is that old score  
Which ye would seemingly ignore ;  
For I cannot forget at once  
How I was told ye called me dunce :  
Moreover, did ye not engage  
To set forth on a pilgrimage ?  
Did I not give you staff and scrip  
And ample coin to pay your trip ?  
And after, sent ye not again  
Poor Cuwaert's head, whom ye had slain  
In concert with the ill-starred Ram,  
Showing your story a mere sham  
About your voyage across the sea,  
While ye stayed still at Malperdy ?  
What man has done more cruel trespass  
Betwixt this time and Candlemas ?  
Nor cruel only, but ill-bred,  
To send a lord his servant's head ;  
To this ye can make no reply,  
For Bellyn, ere he came to die,  
Told us the story all at full ;  
Yes ! you may well a long face pull,  
But that will not improve the matter,  
For nought can Bellyn's story shatter.

'Twas all as clear as sun at noon,  
 And so ye may prepare ye soon  
 To follow after Bellyn's fate,  
 And Cuwaert's murder expiate.  
 Full well ye see we know the tale,  
 And right and justice shall not fail."  
 Then Reynard felt his blood run cold,  
 His legs would scarce his body hold,  
 And his accustomed ready wit,  
 Seemed as far off as Krekynpit.  
 Vainly he speered around for aid,  
 His kin looked shy, as though afraid  
 That a mere glance of recognition  
 Would compromise their own position. .  
 Ever 'twas so, and will be still,  
 That friends turn cold when things go ill.  
 Then Reynard his ill fortune cursed,  
 And sighed as though his heart would burst,  
 While that the ill-used Wolf and Bear,  
 Rejoiced and gladdened at his fear.

XXIX. The  
 Fox speaks  
 fair.



**D**AME RUKENAWA, who lived at Rome,  
 But to the Court was just now come,  
 No living man could lightly daunt,  
 And by good hap was Reynard's aunt.

XXX. Dame  
 Rukenawe's  
 rede.

**XXX. Dame** She saw the turn that things were taking,  
**Rukensawc's** The King old scores again upraking,  
**rede.**

Willing once more the Fox to fix,  
With his disloyal and shady tricks,  
Whereat she felt most sore vexation,  
And forthwith planned his exculpation.  
All wisdom well she understood,  
Her favour with the Queen was good,  
Full flow of speech had she at need,  
And when she spoke, all men gave heed.  
Cried she, " My Lord, doth it behove  
Ye sitting there as great as Jove,  
To show despite and evil rancour,  
As ye for base revenge did hanker ?  
Such feeling, as it seemeth me,  
Becomes not true nobility.  
A man who is in judgment sitting,  
Should be of nought but justice witting,  
And ne'er show forth by word or mien,  
That he bears wrath, or angry spleen.  
In points of law I'm deeper than  
Full many a fur-gowned gentleman,  
For I was taught by one of those  
Who every stratagem well knows,  
In the Pope's palace-house at Woerden,  
Where wiles grow rank as weeds in garden ;  
There had I a soft bed of hay,  
While others on the bare ground lay ;  
For in my speech was ne'er found flaw,  
Through my great knowledge of the law.

Now no man ought the law to halt,  
 But those who so press Reynard's fault  
 Might perchance feel sweet pity's touch,  
 If they bethought themselves how much  
 Might in their own lives well be blamed;  
 Then would they, wot I, be ashamed  
 That thus their voice they raise on high,  
 Clamouring that Reynard ought to die.  
 That golden maxim know ye all,  
 'Let him who stands heed lest he fall!'  
 The Gospel's precious words are these,  
*Estote misericordes,*  
*Nolite judicare, et*  
*Non judicabimini,* and yet  
 In spite of this, men oftentimes deem  
 Their fellows, as 'twould really seem  
 The Gospel's words they'd clean forgot,  
 Or at the least would heed them not.  
 Yet in those words we plainly see,  
 'Judge not, so ye not judged would be.'  
 Bethink ye how the Pharisees  
 Charged a poor woman, just as these  
 Charge Reynard, and with pitying eye  
 Our Lord judged her adultery,  
 Bidding him cast a stone who could  
 Find himself perfect, pure, and good.  
 So 'tis methinketh here to-day,  
 For which of all this folk, I pray,  
 May with clear conscience cast a stone  
 At Reynard, being such an one

XXX. Dame  
 Rukenawe's  
 rede.

XXX. Dame That all his life is clear and free  
Rukenawe's From sin—fulfilled of purity?  
rede. Full many a one whose life's awry,  
Sees clearly in his neighbour's eye  
A tiny straw, yet noteth not  
That he in his a balk hath got.  
Ah! verily, my Lord, I fear  
That many a man now standing here,  
Ready to judge the Fox, is worse  
Than him he ventures to asperse.  
Both his grandfather and his father  
Have been to you good friends, much rather  
Than Isegrym and Bruin Bear,  
Who now your grace and favour share.  
My Lord, forsake not your old friends  
For those who'd work their own vile ends."  
Replied the King, "Most honoured dame,  
Had ye but suffered just the same  
At Reynard's hands as some have done,  
Your tongue would not so glibly run  
In framing plausible excuses  
For his unparalleled abuses.  
What wonder if I bear him hate,  
Seeing he doth accumulate  
One crime upon another ever,  
Till I have peace and quiet never.  
Tell me then in what time or season,  
Stays he his murder, theft, and treason?  
Think ye he is of guile so clear,  
That no man of his frauds need fear?

If Reynard thus a saint ye deem,  
As by your speechword doth beseem,  
High on the altar give him place,  
Making to him your prayers for grace.  
Truth is, throughout the universe,  
He lies beneath each good man's curse,  
And though ye may awhile uphold him  
At last will ye denounce and scold him.  
He hath nor friend, nor kith, nor kin  
Would give a fly to save his skin.  
It certainly is most amusing  
That he, all good and right abusing,  
Should yet find favour in your eyes  
By specious and unblushing lies.  
In all my life ne'er knew I one  
Who had to him some kindness done,  
And trusted his good fellowship,  
But he would one day feel such grip,  
That Reynard he would give clear berth  
Henceforth, till laid in mother earth.  
Some day you will with others cry,  
'I too once bit shall twice be shy,'  
Mark me! No fox doth ever fail  
To strike his best friend with his tail."  
Answered Dame Rukenawe, "Great Lord,  
Thanks have ye for your well-meant word,  
Yet Reynard I esteem and love  
All other living beasts above,  
And well remember I the time  
When your own heart with mine did chime,

XXX. Dame  
Rukenawe's  
rede.

XXX. Dame In holding Reynard's deeds good weight,  
 Rukenawc's Though otherwise ye turn of late.  
 rede.

A man should hold his friends in gre,  
 And his foes hate but tardily ;  
 Howso the world turns, ne'ertheless  
 Fit constancy and steadfastness  
 Well to great lords. Praise not the day  
 Till it be past and worn away ;  
 Fair counsel only is held good  
 Of those by whom 'tis understood.



XXXI. A PARABLE OF A MAN  
 THAT DELIVERED A SER-  
 PENT FROM THE PERIL  
 OF DEATH. S. S. S.

XXXI.  
 Strange ser-  
 pent snare.

TWO years now past, within this Court  
 A Man and Serpent judgment sought  
 About a case, which in great doubt

Still stood, though turned 'twas inside out.  
 Thus far 'tis clear, the pleas allege,  
 A Serpent, passing through a hedge,  
 Was by a snare held hard and fast,  
 And so must he have breathed his last,  
 Had not a Man, who passed thereby,  
 Heard his sad moan and piteous cry,  
 And with quick hand and tender care  
 Released him from the treacherous snare,  
 Taking from him the pledged word first,  
 That though by nature he hath thirst

Ever to do to man some evil,  
 He wished his skin might parch and shrivel,  
 Ere he would show ingratitude  
 Towards one who wrought him such great good.  
 Then as companions forth they fare,  
 Making a strange assorted pair,  
 But bound together by the tie  
 Of gratitude and sympathy.  
 This friendship might have held much longer,  
 Had not the Serpent, gripped by hunger,  
 Exclaimed, ' Dear friend, know ye the saw,  
 "Necessity forgets all law?"  
 Well, then, it haps just now that I  
 Feel hunger most outrageously,  
 And to keep life within my heart,  
 Suppose you form of me a part,  
 For if I swallowed you down whole,  
 'Twould in my body keep my soul,  
 Nor should I thereby break my oath,  
 Simply one skin would cover both ;  
 Don't let the thought of it unnerve you,  
 I should not harm but safe preserve you.'  
 Backward the man stepped with a start,  
 For he'd no lust to form a part  
 Of his new-made but scaly brother,  
 Preferring to remain another.  
 Quoth he, ' Is't thus you'd me repay ?  
 Is this the oath ye made to-day ?  
 Your reasoning seems a trifle curt,  
 As to your doing me no hurt.'

XXXI.  
 Strange ser-  
 pent snare.

XXXI.  
Strange serpent  
snare.

Replied the Serpent, 'See ye then,  
This will stand good before all men,  
For when one suffers hunger's grip,  
Farewell to oaths and fellowship.'  
Answered the Man, 'If this must be,  
At least short respite give to me,  
Until some learned man we find,  
Who knows all questions of such kind.'  
Replied the Serpent, 'That's but right,  
Some one well read we'll find ere night,  
Who can resolve the knotty question  
If I may give you good digestion.'  
Of wisdom they soon found a haven,  
Meeting with Tiselyn the Raven,  
And his most knowing son Slyndpere,  
To whom they made the whole case clear.  
Quoth Tiselyn, 'The question's fine,  
The Serpent 'tis quite clear must dine,  
For did he not, 'twould then befall,  
The man ne'er saved his life at all,  
But only made it so much longer,  
That he at last might die of hunger,  
And if this dining should go through,  
I think I might make number two,  
And, Slyndpere, you can make a third,  
A clearer case I never heard.'  
Then quoth the Serpent, 'Now how say ye?  
Is there a doubt that I may slay ye?'  
Replied the Man, 'How from a thief  
Could I e'er hope to find relief?'

Besides, this Tiselyn is but one,  
 And his deem count I less than none,  
 There should at least be two or three,  
 Judgment to give unerringly.'  
 'Well, so let be,' the Serpent cried,  
 Let any two or three decide,  
 I ask for nought but what is fair,  
 See, yonder come the Wolf and Bear,  
 Who better can the case resolve  
 Or light from out this dark evolve?'  
 So told they all the matter o'er  
 To them again, e'en as before.  
 Straight cried they, 'Who can doubt the case?  
 Plain 'tis as nose upon the face;  
 He who is hungry must be fed,  
 Else were he surely good as dead.  
 The Man hath little cause to gride him,  
 If the Snake puts him safe inside him,  
 For whereof can he justly chafe  
 If that he be but sound and safe?'  
 Then fell the Man in mortal fear,  
 Seeing his last hour draw anear  
 As toward him came the Serpent glowering,  
 Led on by hunger overpowering.  
 Cried he, 'Ye do a mortal wrong,  
 I deemed your oath for good and strong,  
 But being led by appetite,  
 You're dead to every sense of right.'  
 'What!' cried the Snake, 'Not yet content?  
 Twice have ye heard how judgment went.'

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 Strange serpent  
 snare.

XXXI.  
Strange ser-  
pent share.

'Yea,' quoth the Man, 'But is it just  
That you on me such judgment thrust?  
Those who but live as thieves and robbers,  
In law and justice are but jobbers.  
Appeal I now unto the King,  
My cause at his throne's foot I fling,  
And whatso sentence he shall give,  
Thereby will I or die or live.'  
To this the Wolf and Bear assent,  
And the Snake, weening what they meant,  
Agreed likewise, for all the three  
Believed they had the ear of thee,  
And that thy judgment they could guide  
To fall upon the stronger side.  
So came they all before you here,  
The Wolf, the Serpent, and the Bear,  
And thinking justice to outpace  
If they had witness in the case,  
The Wolf's two sons therein they pull,  
Empty-belly and Never-full,  
To each one promising a share  
Of the feast plentiful and rare,  
Which they all look to, if they can  
But get your judgment 'gainst the Man.  
But, hungering, howled they in such sort,  
Ye turned both boys from out the court.  
The Man with deadly horror trembled,  
Yet as he might his fear dissembled,  
And to your Grace told forth the tale,  
Trusting plain justice might avail

To save him from the Serpent's jaws,  
 Knowing your just and equal laws.  
 My Lord, hereat were ye much puzzled,  
 Willing the Serpent should be muzzled  
 From eating up his benefactor,  
 Yet said ye, 'Hunger is an actor  
 That plays a part in all men's lives,  
 And in its train grim death arrives,  
 Unless that someone else will die  
 Its cruel calls to satisfy.  
 Yet now that I have heard ye both,  
 The Man's good deed, the Serpent's oath,  
 And on the other hand his need,  
 Such doubtings in my mind do breed,  
 That what with one and what with t'other  
 My mind, I own, is in a pother.'  
 Then cried ye, 'Send for Reynard straight,  
 He will the matter extricate  
 From out this miserable tangle,  
 Whereof ye all stand here and jangle,  
 He will clear up this dire confusion,  
 And bring it to a plain conclusion ;  
 He knows each good and sapient saw,  
 And the whole matter of the law.'  
 When all the pleadings had been read,  
 Reynard most wisely shook his head,  
 And said, 'My Lord, the case is plain  
 The Serpent must go back again  
 In the same peril as he stood ;  
 Then, if the Man should think it good

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 Strange ser-  
 pent snare.

XXXI.  
Strange ser-  
pent snare.

Once more to grant to him relief,  
Giving unto his oath belief,  
E'en let him do it at his cost,  
So neither hath nor won nor lost,  
For both will be but where they were;  
My Lord, is not this judgment fair?  
The Man may go free as he will,  
Leaving the Serpent bounden still,  
E'en as at first he would have done  
Had he known him for such an one  
As sets no store by strongest oath,  
Thus do ye justice to them both.'

**M**Y Lord, this judgment ye approved,  
For ever have ye justice loved,  
And praised ye Reynard, for that he  
Most wisely let the man go free,  
Judging as justly as he would  
For one of his own kin and blood.  
The Wolf and Bear, ye must admit,  
Ne'er did ye such a benefit.  
They're wondrous hands, we know, at mealing,  
And very dapper too, at stealing,  
Yet seem to think it meritorious  
To be o'er little thieves censorious  
Who carry off a cock or hen,  
While they will empty out a pen  
Of good fat sheep, or steal a horse,  
Just as a simple thing of course,  
And think they should go free and quit,

And solemnly in judgment sit  
On every petty small defaulter  
While they themselves deserve the halter.  
Wiser they think themselves, I ween,  
Than Solomon or Avicene,  
And of their wit, a tiny bottle,  
They rank before all Aristotle ;  
Of their great deeds their talk is full,  
But 'tis much cry and little wool ;  
Others may do, when work is done,  
While they stand by and just look on ;  
My Lord, these surely be not wise,  
Who all beside themselves despise,  
People and land, and tower, and town,  
Destroy will they, or let go down,  
And whose house burns, reck not their souls  
So they may warm them at the coals.  
Heedless are they what's lost or won,  
So that they better number one.  
How different from these base-souled crocks  
Is your tried friend, old Reynard Fox ;  
And all the lineage that he owns,  
Born of the selfsame blood and bones !  
Good Reynard's first and dearest thought  
Is how true service may be wrought  
To you and yours, and all those who  
Are dear and precious unto you.  
He and his kin have one desire,  
Wherein they never fail or tire,  
Which is to do your high behest—

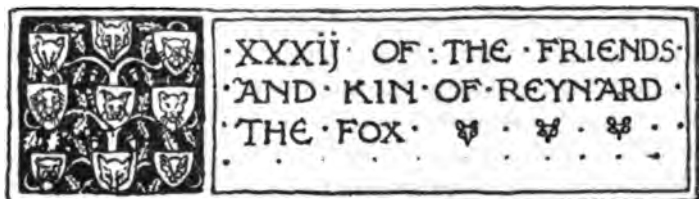
XXXI.  
Strange serpent  
snare.

XXXI.  
Strange ser-  
pent snare.

Whate'er you will, that deem they best.  
In them ye safely may confide,  
For fastest friend is longest tried ;  
Ye say his kin all from him flee—  
My Lord, had any man but ye  
Spoken such word of cruel scorn,  
'Twere better he had ne'er been born ;  
For on him should such wrack be taken  
He'd count him as of God forsaken,  
And find himself in such ill trim  
All joy within him would grow dim.  
But you, without or stint or measure,  
May Reynard rate and scold at pleasure ;  
For nought can hinder his goodwill,  
But he will ever love you still,  
Through right or wrong, through good or evil,  
For you he'd circumvent the devil.  
And should another 'gainst you speak,  
Such vengeance on him would we wreak,  
That all would say, ' The Fox's kin  
This fearful plight have put him in ; '  
For fighting for our sovereign Lord  
Unmeasured joy doth us afford.  
My Lord, with your most kind permission  
I'll give you a short exposition  
Of Reynard's worthy kin and kith,  
Showing you that I speak no myth ;  
And every one, I warrant you,  
Will lay down life, and fortune too,  
To render service to their King,

Their Lord, their light, their everything.  
 My Lord, belong I to that party,  
 And ever give ye service hearty  
 For love of Reynard, whom I hold  
 To be of sterling worth untold.  
 I am, as well ye know, a wife,  
 Yet gladly would I risk my life,  
 And that of my dear children three  
 To further his security.  
 Yea, sooner would I lose my all  
 Than ill on his dear head should fall.

XXXI.  
 Strange ser-  
 pent snare.



**M**Y first child hath to name Bitelives;  
 Strife loves he, from mere joy he strives;  
 Wherefore good meat and trenchers fat  
 Of all men's hands he cometh at;  
 And thus his brother, Fulrompe called,  
 When Bitelives' appetite is palled,  
 Comes in for numberless tit-bits,  
 Which to his liking well befits.  
 My third dear child a daughter is,  
 Hatenette she well is called ywis,  
 For ever lives she uncontrolled,  
 No mesh yet made can Hatenette hold.  
 To other each is fast and true

XXXII.  
 The droll  
 Fox breed.

XXXII.  
The droll  
Fox breed.

In all they think or say or do."  
Then called she forth her children three,  
Saying, "My dear ones, stand by me,  
And by good Reynard Fox, your eme,  
As worthy of your best esteem."  
Then cried she, "Come forth, all of ye,  
Who of my kin and Reynard's be!  
And let us pray our noble Lord  
That Reynard's worth find due reward."  
Then came forth many a beast anon,  
The Muschont, Fitchew, and Martron,  
The Beaver and his wife Ordgale,  
The Squirrel with wide bushy tail,  
Followed the Bonsing and the Ferret,  
Who well the henwife's hatred merit,  
For e'en as Reynard are these twain  
Of roosters and fat pullets fain.  
The Genet also and Ostrole  
(More rare to sight than delving mole),  
The Otter and his wife Pancrot,  
Who in past days had quarrel hot  
With Reynard, as did too the Beaver,  
But when Dame Rukenawe said 'twould grieve her  
If that the strife continued were,  
At once 'twas healed up then and there.  
Of other beasts called forth she plenty,  
Running them up to more than twenty.  
Came Dame Atrote with her two sisters,  
Of right with wrong ingenious twisters,  
Known as most cunning of sophisters;

The Ermine, decker of Kings anointed,  
 The Hedgehog, clad in armour pointed,  
 The Rat, the Water-rat, yea, more  
 Than would by far exceed a score,  
 All these would Reynard's fame sustain,  
 By word and deed, by might and main.  
 "My Lord," quoth then Dame Rukenawe,  
 "Count ye now Reynard an outlaw?  
 See here if he of friends is lacking,  
 What man, I ask, hath better backing?  
 Where would ye, then, in all your land  
 Find trustier warriors to your hand,  
 Ready to venture life and limb  
 For you, great Lord, at word from him?  
 Though ye be mighty, strong, and hardy,  
 To scorn such help ye should be tardy;  
 No man has e'er too many friends  
 As o'er the world's highway he wends.  
 Of all these things must Reynard think,  
 And hereby must he swim or sink.  
 If he can find no sound excuses  
 For these alleged crimes and abuses,  
 Then must he be prepared to die,  
 And suffer the last penalty.  
 But should he prove that his accusers  
 Are but malicious, mean traducers,  
 Then let him once more sit on high  
 In honour, fame, and liberty."  
 Exclaimed the Queen, in eager way,  
 "This told I the King yesterday;

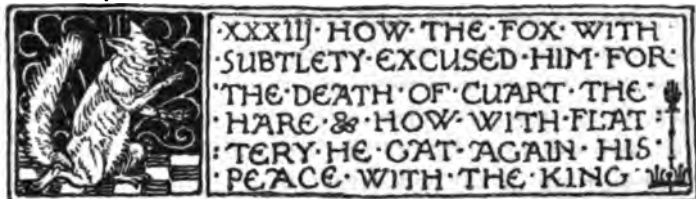
XXXII.  
 The droll  
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XXXII.  
The droll  
Fox breed.

But he so angry was and fierce,  
As his dread eyes would through me pierce,  
That nought of reason would he hear,  
But struck me wellnigh dumb with fear."  
Then spake the Leopard forth also,  
Saying, "Great Sir, ye surely know  
That when good men their witness give  
For who shall die and who shall live,  
No further then avails your might  
Than to hold scales 'twixt wrong and right,  
Else should your worshipful estate  
Be held at base and villain rate.  
Let both sides speak, and then remains,  
That with quick wit and earnest pains,  
Discreetly ye the right adjudge,  
Wherefrom ye never more must budge."  
The King replied with look severe,  
"Than this can no thing be more clear;  
And if my former judgment hasted,  
Think ye what sorrow I had tasted!  
Of Cuwaert's death with sorrow learning,  
My soul was for swift vengeance burning.  
If when the Fox his case doth state  
I find his life immaculate,  
Who shall rejoice so much as I  
At his good faith and probity?  
None of his kith nor of his kin  
Shall joy so much as I therein."  
Then Reynard tingled through his blood:  
"Ha! ha!" thought he, "This is right good,

Once more my life begins to boom,  
 The She-ape makes the branch to bloom !  
 Once more she brings me a good chance,  
 Once more I'll tread life's merry dance,  
 Once more shall truth peer from my eyes,  
 While I but coin such gorgeous lies  
 As ne'er were heard by man before,  
 And maybe will be ne'er heard more."

XXXII.  
 The droll  
 Fox breed.



**T**HEN round the Court stole Reynard's gaze  
 With well-feigned wonder and amaze,  
 And cried he, "What was that ye said,  
 My Lord, of Cuwaert being dead ?  
 Twice have I heard it, yet to me  
 A riddle 'tis and mystery.  
 Shall I then ne'er see Cuwaert more ?  
 Must I my dear friend's death deplore ?  
 And the most worthy Ram, dear Bellyn,  
 Doth he no longer this world dwell in ?  
 Alas ! alas ! This is most sad,  
 With grief I fear I shall go mad.  
 And then the jewels, choice and rare,  
 That I gave into Bellyn's care,  
 One for yourself, and two I ween  
 For your most dear and gracious Queen."

XXXIII.  
 Reynard's  
 romance.

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Reynard's  
romance.

Quoth the King, "Nought but Cuwaert's head  
Brought Bellyn, as I erst have said,  
Wherefore on him I vengeance took,  
For such gross insult who could brook?  
And the vile caitiff's own confession  
Fixed him with this most foul transgression."  
Quoth Reynard, as he piped his eye,  
"My Lord, I ready feel to die,  
For hearing this from your own lips,  
All hope within my bosom nips,  
And now I suffer sore alarm,  
Lest to my gifts has come some harm,  
For 'twould my life or reason cost  
If those sweet jewels should be lost;  
No more for me would life have zest,  
I should but long in earth to rest.  
And my poor dear wife, Ermelyne,  
Will scarce survive it as I ween.  
Alas! for her beloved sake  
I feel each nerve within me quake,  
For never more in her sweet face  
Shall I forgiveness find or grace."  
Quoth the She-ape, "Dear Reynard, ye  
Should not feel such deep misery;  
Cheer up and tell the full tale forth  
Of these same jewels and their worth;  
Be they above or underground,  
We'll raise the world till they be found,  
The books of Master Akeryn  
The news o'er all the earth shall spin,

And all the priests in all the churches  
 Shall every curse-word that besmirches  
 The soul of man, pour freely forth  
 In every land from south to north,  
 'Gainst those who wrongfully withhold them,  
 Or those who have or bought or sold them,  
 Till he who has them, shall in terror  
 Come and crave pardon of his error.  
 No matter what the finding cost,  
 They never can or shall be lost."  
 Replied the Fox, "Dear aunt, my dole  
 Is somewhat eased, upon the whole,  
 By your good words, but yet I dread  
 Lest we may all of us be dead  
 Ere that the holders of such wonders,  
 E'en at the call of priestly thunders,  
 Would make their minds up to produce them ;  
 So much their beauty will seduce them,  
 That they would count the world well lost,  
 And sooner into hell be tost,  
 Than render up such precious treasures ;  
 So overwhelming are the pleasures  
 That their possession doth confer,  
 Their holder is their worshipper !  
 Make my heart ache it ever must  
 That Bellyn should deceive my trust ;  
 At once throughout the world I'll wend,  
 And all my life and fortune spend,  
 Ere I to such a loss submit—  
 E'en gloomy death were joy to it."

XXXIII.  
 Reynard's  
 romance.

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Reynard's  
romance.

Then with a voice half choked and muffled,  
The Fox most sorrowfully snuffled,  
"Hearken ye, all my kin and friends,  
And ye will see that no amends  
Can e'er be made me for this loss,  
Which doth my life with sorrow cross.

FIRST was a ring of finest gold,  
Which doth inside its circle hold  
Three letters curiously enamelled,  
With sable and with azure trammelled,  
Each one a mystic Hebrew name  
Burned on its zone with ardent flame.  
These names did I with labour spell,  
And lastly came to read them well.  
All three stood out in figures clear,  
Written by Abrion of Trier,  
A wise man and all-knowing seer.  
He is a sage of deepest learning,  
All mystic lore right well discerning;  
All languages are in his ken  
That ever yet were used by men,  
And of all manner herbs and trees,  
The use he knows and properties;  
So high his spirit is and prompt,  
That fiercest beasts he knows to dompt,  
And can unto his will subdue;  
Yet he's an unbelieving Jew.  
No other man such knowledge owns  
In properties of precious stones,

And of the virtues they possess,  
He knows, where other men but guess.  
To him the mystic words I showed,  
Witting what skill in him abode,  
And he by favour told to me  
What meant those mystic writings three.  
To form the names do they suffice  
Which Seth sought out in Paradise  
When he to Adam brought the oil  
Of Mercy, a most precious foil  
Against the curse which God declared  
On him, and which all men have shared.  
Now whoso on him these names beareth,  
Whereso throughout the world he fareth,  
He ne'er need fear the deadly shaft  
Of thunder, lightning, or witchcraft,  
Nor whatso fellowship he's in  
Shall he fall into deadly sin,  
Nor shall he in the winter hoar,  
Though snows fall thick and earth lies frore,  
Fear to the cold his limbs to yield,  
Although he lie long nights afield,  
So he these words put trust upon,  
Witnesseth Master Abrion.  
Withoutforth of the ring ye see  
A stone which hath of colours three ;  
The one part is of crystal red,  
And seemeth sparks of fire to shed  
In such wise, that one fares by night  
Freely as though 'twere broad daylight,

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Reynard's  
romance.

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

For by the sparkle of the stone,  
Or day or night appear but one.  
That other part is white and clear,  
As polished with a burnisher;  
Good this is when one's eyes feel smart,  
Or swellings rise in any part,  
Or if one suffers ache of head,  
Or fails with other sickness dread,  
As colic, strangury or canker,  
And for a bettering doth hanker,  
It needeth but a single touch  
Of this stone, and its power is such,  
That in a moment one is whole,  
And never more disease's dole  
Shall vex the body till mild death  
Cometh to steal away its breath.  
Alas ! alas ! that ever ye  
Should fall in with such villainy  
As to be reft of such a jewel,  
Ne'er yet on earth was fate more cruel.  
Now have ye of two colours heard,  
Yet furthermore there is a third,  
Which shows like as of glassy green,  
With sprinklings here and there between  
Of richest purple, tinted nigh  
Unto the far-famed Tyrian dye.  
The master told me, for God's truth,  
That whosoe'er in age or youth  
Should bear this stone, that never he  
Should hurt have of his enemy;

And that e'en men of greatest might  
Should ne'er misdo him in the fight ;  
Yea, e'en though naked in a field  
He stood, against men armed and steeled,  
A hundred they, and he alone,  
Yet were the hundred nought 'gainst one,  
Seen that he be of gentle birth,  
Of high condition and of worth,  
For never churl or villain can  
Find virtue in this talisman ;  
And would he that his luck were lasting,  
Let him look on it daily fasting.  
Then unto you must I make known  
Another virtue of this stone,  
Which is, that wheresoe'er he goes  
Who bears it, e'en 'mid bitterest foes,  
He yet shall have the power to move  
All hearts around him to his love.  
And even those from whom but late  
He envy had and direst hate,  
Shall at his will his right hand grip  
With welcome and good fellowship.  
My Lord, one need be pure as ice  
To own a pearl of such great price,  
And knowing that full oftentimes I  
Have stumbled through infirmity,  
So seemed it me a bounden duty,  
A treasure of such worth and beauty  
To offer to my lord and master,  
That it might suffer no disaster,

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Reynard's  
romance.

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

But as a jewel being set  
In his most lordly coronet,  
It might endow him evermore  
With higher glory than of yore.  
This ring, whose virtues none can measure,  
I found among my father's treasure,  
And with it lay a glass and comb,  
Which, taking to my humble home,  
My wife would have for her possession,  
But 'twould have been an indiscretion  
Scarce to be pardoned, if that I  
Hearkened her importunity,  
For in no hands must they be seen  
But those of our most gracious Queen.

**M**Y Lord, my words are all too weak  
The virtues of the comb to speak ;  
'Tis made of a most wondrous bone,  
Found in one noble beast alone,  
Which for its name is hight Panthera,  
No phantom is he or chimera,  
But pastures him 'neath groves of spice  
'Twixt Ind and the Earthly Paradise ;  
Lusty, and clear, and bright is he,  
And coloured all so variously,  
That of all hues 'neath heaven's sun,  
His skin partaketh every one.  
And then his savour is so sweet,  
That when it doth the nostrils meet,  
All earthly senses doth it leaven,

Lifting the brain to very heaven.  
The body, too, with health it fills,  
Staving away all mortal illa.  
This savour which Panthera yields,  
Causeth all beasts within the fields  
Ever to follow him about  
With homage and respect devout,  
For of him gather they sweet health,  
Whereof his body carries wealth.  
The bone, whereof I erst have spoken,  
When that Panthera's life is broken,  
Of his whole body holds the fragrance,  
Whence 'tis diffused as 'twere a radiance :  
Fair is that bone, and broad, and thin,  
And one whole piece remains it in,  
Though it be battered, struck, and smitten,  
Or by the mightiest jaw be bitten ;  
Nor shall it in all time decay,  
Nor in fierce fire e'er waste away ;  
And though so hard, and close, and tight,  
Yet is it than soft down more light.  
And its most sweet and fragrant savour  
Doth in men's nostrils find such favour,  
That he who smelleth of it must  
Straightway forego all other lust,  
And is of such glad, jocund heart,  
That fears he not e'en death's keen dart.  
The comb, like silver burnished bright,  
Shines as the moon on cloudless night,  
The teeth all even, firm, and straight,

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Reynard's  
romance.

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

While 'twixt the small ones and the great  
Lies a good ample field and space,  
Whereon, pourtrayed with sweetest grace,  
Are images so subtly wrought,  
As well might baffle human thought;  
And in good truth thus carved were they  
In that wellnigh forgotten day  
When ancient gods ruled o'er the earth,  
And the wide world was filled with mirth.  
Herein are wondrous stories told  
In rich enamelling of gold;  
Sable and silver check the field,  
And with bright colours is annealed  
A tale full fraught of love and hate,  
Which in short words will I relate;  
Some glimmering notion it may give  
What wonders in that carving live.

**I**T is a tale of days long past,  
How Paris was for judgment cast  
'Twixt three great dames of passing beauty,  
Who each, to draw him from the duty  
Which on him lay of justly deeming,  
Promised him gifts of such high seeming  
As well might turn the strongest brain,  
Howe'er of justice it were fain.  
The names of the fair ladies three  
Who strove for beauty's mastery,  
Were Juno, wife of highest Jove,  
Venus, the queen of soft-eyed love,

And Pallas, in whose deep discerning  
Were stored all mysteries of learning.  
Each of these claimed the first to be  
In perfect form and symmetry,  
And each her beauty's wealth revealed  
From envious draperies unsealed,  
Asking that Paris' dazzled eyes  
Should to the fairest judge the prize ;  
An apple of pure ruddy gold,  
Which she, as Beauty's Queen, might hold.  
This Paris was a herdman young,  
Who all his days had passed among  
Fair Ida's rocks and thickets wild,  
Sweet Nature's rude and untaught child,  
Now in a moment is he there  
Of loveliness the arbiter.  
To warp his judgment to her side  
Juno her witcheries first tried,  
Promising that with her success  
He should be master of riches  
Greater than mortal e'er had known,  
Or could in the wide earth be shown.  
Then Pallas cried, ' Nay, list to me,  
And I will give ye mastery  
Of highest wisdom's richest lore,  
Such as to no man heretofore  
In all the wide world hath belonged.  
Moreover, ne'er shall ye be wronged  
In whatso field of deadly strife,  
But evermore through all thy life

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Reynard's  
romance.

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Reynard's  
romance.

Shall victory have in tented field ;  
To thee shall sternest warriors yield,  
And through the world thy name shall ring,  
Of wit and arms the lord and king.'  
Then spake fair Venus : ' Never I,  
By riches, lore, or arms will try  
To win thy young and untried heart,  
But unto thee will I impart  
A gift of far more precious cost,  
For which men count the world well lost ;  
A gift which with no wealth is bought,  
And may in vain by arms be sought,  
And to gain which by learning ever  
Hath proved a foolish, vain endeavour ;  
Yet through the whole world's breadth and length  
No gift hath in itself such strength  
As that which thou through me shalt prove—  
'Tis the fair gift of woman's love !  
Am I not fairest of the fair,  
Giving a gift beyond compare ?  
For man within his power may hold  
Riches that never could be told ;  
In arms he may all men excel,  
And of his deeds great scalds may tell,  
While of sweet wisdom's endless store  
The heights and depths may he explore ;  
Yet should he set these things above  
The priceless gift of woman's love,  
Like Sodom's apples will they be,  
Dust, emptiness, and vanity.

To me then judge forthwith the prize  
 'Twixt those who dazzle now thine eyes.'  
 To Venus gave he ready ear,  
 Who from his heart drave out the fear  
 Of Pallas', and of Juno's scorn,  
 Unheeding of their wrath the thorn ;  
 And then, to stay all love's alarms,  
 Gave she, all willing, to his arms  
 Fair Helen, of all women fairest,  
 For through the earth's bounds, ever rarest  
 Among all women is she named,  
 The widest known, the farthest famed.  
 Then Paris gave to her the apple,  
 And ere grey dawn the sky did dapple,  
 Sped he and Helen unto Troy,  
 Where passed their life in wedded joy,  
 And so by Venus' help did he  
 Live through the world right jollily.  
 And on this bone, so bright and rare,  
 Not carved alone, these figures were,  
 But by good pencraft was the story  
 Told forth of love's great victory.

XXXIII.  
 Reynard's  
 romance.

**N**OW of the mirror shall ye hear  
 Within whose depths bright, fair, and clear,  
 Such wonders lie, that maybe ye  
 Will think my words run hastily ;  
 Such vertue hath it that one can  
 The actions know of any man,  
 Or any beast, within a mile,

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

Whether he laugh, or weep, or smile,  
Or do some thing which he would hide  
From all men in the world beside.  
And he who looks within this glass  
Shall know not only what doth pass  
In action, but shall also know  
The secrets through the breasts that go  
Of those who seen are in the mirror,  
And tell them without fear of error.  
Yet more, whatso of sore disease  
Doth a man's eyesight wear and teaze,  
Hath he the luck by any chance  
To give within this glass one glance,  
So shall all prickings, motes, or smart,  
Forthwith from out his eyes depart,  
And eld shall find its vision strong  
As in sweet days when eyes were young.  
My lord, I think ye'll not reprove  
The anger that my breast doth move,  
Or wonder that wild passions toss  
In my poor heart at such a loss.  
But hear ye further, the glass stood  
Within a frame of Cetyne wood,  
A wood so light, yet fast and sure,  
That till doomsday it would endure ;  
Nothing could e'er its substance rot,  
And piercing worms would touch it not.  
And therefore great King Solomon  
Such wondrous store did set thereon,  
That all his glorious temple he  
Lined with the wood of Cetyne tree.

**M**EN prized it and esteemed it thus,  
E'en as the tree of Hebenus;  
Of which tree 'twas King Crompart bade

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

A horse should be by magic made,  
Seeking to win that peerless lass,  
Daughter of King Morcadigas.  
This horse was fashioned with such skill,  
That ever at the rider's will  
Unnumbered miles in one short hour  
'Twould travel, by mysterious power,  
Which some said was but prisoned air,  
Which seeking to escape from where  
'Twas held by the magician's art,  
Would cause the steed through space to dart  
In such wise that its speed outran  
The horse of far-famed Cambuscan;  
Yet at the turning of a pin  
At once the rider's power 'twas in,  
And if to stay it were his will,  
Quicker than thought it stood stock still.  
Cried the King's son, Cleomedes,  
'What old wives' fables then are these?'  
Lusty he was, and young and hardy,  
And in no feat of daring tardy,  
But ever sought great deeds to do,  
Winning renown and fame therethrough.  
So leapt he on the horse forthright,  
And vanished straightway out of sight,  
E'en as King Crompart turned the pin,  
Which he had deftly fixed therein;

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

And long miles off was this proud boaster  
Ere one could say a paternoster,  
For he at such swift pace was carried,  
As he had to the wind been married.  
Cleomedes was sore afeard,  
As the blue distant hills he neared,  
For seemed it as o'er fell and plain  
He aye must travel, and again  
He ne'er should see the home he loved.  
But how this in the ending proved,  
How far he rode, what sights he saw,  
Ere he was witting of the law  
By which to rule the magic horse  
That bore him on his headlong course ;  
What horrid fear possessed his mind  
That he had left his life behind,  
And what great joyance filled his heart  
When once he learned the craft and art  
By which to turn his steed about ;  
And with what loud triumphant shout  
His loving friends received him back,  
I leave untold, since time doth lack :  
But yet would have it understood  
Of equal virtue was this wood  
Whereof the mirror's frame is made.  
Great King, if I were not afraid  
That you your servant might upbraid,  
Deeming he had in some degree  
O'erstepped the bounds of verity,  
Then I the full account would give

Of the strange unmatched narrative  
That sculptured in this frame is seen.  
Such things you'd say could ne'er have been,  
But plainly there they pictured lie,  
Like work of some great deity.  
With rapture do the eyes behold  
The scarlet, sable, silver, gold,  
The azure, and the cynope,  
Wherewith the pictures coloured be.  
And 'neath each picture hath the pen  
Told of the fair dames and the men  
Who here live out their lives once more,  
As erst they lived in times of yore.  
Their days of glee, their sorrows deep,  
Causing by turns to joy and weep,  
Are here set forth in such fair guise,  
As lighten must the dullest eyes.

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

**A**LSO about the framework's border  
Are deftly carved, in form and order,  
Three serried rows ; first beast, then bird  
Of every kind is seen, the third  
Is formed of every sweetest flower  
That e'er hath bloomed in woodland bower.  
In meanest hands these still would be  
Marvels of man's dexterity,  
For on each flower, and bird, and beast,  
The craftsman hath set forth such feast  
Of human handiwork, that rife  
Seems feather, hair, and leaf, with life.

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

But when the secret open lies  
(Which finest skill, untaught, defies),  
And that the owner holds the key  
To all the hidden mystery,  
Then may he at his own free will  
These wonders make more wondrous still ;  
For at a magic word, which I  
Will tell to you in secrecy,  
At once the birds are seen alive,  
And with sweet emulation strive  
Whose carolling shall sweetest sound,  
While the rapt ear, with joy profound,  
Hearkens to every varying note  
Poured forth from out each tuneful throat,  
Grieved only that as time doth pass,  
It must, like all things, cease, alas !  
For with a magic word, once more  
All turns to carved wood as before.  
Then with the beasts, if that thou wilt  
But touch them with thy dagger's hilt,  
Speaking again a mystic word,  
Which shall from me at need be heard,  
At once they are endowed with being,  
Walking, eating, hearing, seeing,  
Obeying all thy wish and will,  
And at a word once more are still.  
So for the flowers, if but their tips  
Once touched were by the Queen's sweet lips,  
Forthwith would they bright hues assume,  
And exhale fragrant, rich perfume,

As though they plucked were in one's sight  
From out a garden's warm sunlight.  
Then when thou would'st that they return  
Back to carved wood, cast them to burn  
Upon the hearth 'mid living brands,  
And forthwith clear before you stands  
The mirror's frame e'en as before,  
Fair hues and fragrance all are o'er.  
My Lord, in my poor judgment, yet  
In all my life I ne'er have set  
My eyes on anything so rare,  
So lustly, costly, or so fair,  
Or to the heart of man more pleasant,  
For be he king or be he peasant  
Who views this wonder of all lands,  
He tranced and struck before it stands,  
In a delirium of delight;  
And whoso once hath seen the sight,  
That man will count all loss but gain  
So he once more that sight attain.

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

**M**Y Lord, while daylight yet avails,  
Will I tell forth some other tales  
That stand around that glass, which ye  
Methinks will hear delightedly.  
The first one tells by what strange course  
Man learned to dompt and curb the horse,  
And how 'twas by his own volition  
He came into servile condition.  
'Twas thus, a Horse well grown and strong,

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

Envied a Hart who sped along  
At such a swift or flying pace,  
That he felt nowhere in the race,  
And turned it in his heart how he  
Might o'er him gain the mastery.  
So to a Herdsman thus he spake :  
' If thou wilt help me to o'ertake  
And conquer this swift-speeding Hart,  
So will I give thee to thy part  
His flesh, his bones, his horns, his skin,  
To sell, to eat, to clothe thee in.  
While I the spite and envy sate  
Which he doth in my heart create.'  
' But,' quoth the Herdsman, ' if you find  
That his swift foot leaves you behind,  
Prithee the riddle then explain  
How I may unto him attain.'  
Quoth the Horse, ' Mount ye on my back,  
I will supply the speed ye lack,  
And ever hunting him, we so  
Shall drive him into death's last throe.'  
The Herdsman sprang and sat the Horse,  
And through long hours the Hart did course,  
But he, fleet well-nigh as the wind,  
The Man and Horse left far behind,  
Till cried the Horse, ' I'm now aweary,  
This hunting work I find but dreary,  
Alight and let me now go free,  
No further need have I of thee.'  
' No need of me?' the Herdsman cried,

' That may be, but whate'er betide,  
 No more shalt thou thy freedom gain,  
 Since I of thy good use am fain.  
 Thy mouth my curb and bridle feels,  
 And the sharp spurs upon my heels,  
 Shall teach thee thou hast found thy master,  
 To slack thy pace, or make it faster.  
 Maybe thou find'st my thralldom sore,  
 But thereof shalt be quit no more.'  
 Learn we then by the steed's mishap,  
 How one is ta'en in one's own trap.  
 Many a man plotting 'gainst his neighbour,  
 Doth his own back with stripes belabour.

XXXIII.  
 Reynard's  
 romance.

**I** N the frame, too, that holds the glass,  
 Was this tale of the Hound and Ass.  
 A man who farmed a fertile stead,  
 Had a small hound that shared his bed,  
 And ever from his master's plate  
 Would claim a share of that he ate;  
 And oft with many a playful trick,  
 His hands and face would kiss and lick.  
 And when released from daily care,  
 The farmer rested in his chair,  
 The Hound his knees would frisking ply,  
 Or in his lap asleep would lie.  
 Well loved the man the little Hound,  
 That followed his diurnal round,  
 And oft with him would sport and play,  
 Ne'er to his gambols saying nay.

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

Quoth Baldwyn, the hard working Ass,  
It throughly doth my wit surpass,  
Why loves my master this foul Hound,  
That on his knees and lap doth bound,  
Eats of the best, and softly sleeps,  
While me in a poor shed he keeps ;  
Upon the cold hard earth I lie,  
No soft bed doth he me supply ;  
Thistles and nettles must I eat,  
While the Hound hath sweet savoury meat.  
No longer will I suffer this,  
But forthwith will I try ywis,  
How I can gain my master's love,  
For sure my worth is much above  
That of a paltry idle Hound,  
Who of no use is ever found,  
But time outwhileth day by day,  
In slothful sleep and senseless play,  
While I am never known to shirk  
My round of dull laborious work,  
But by hard labour, more and more,  
Add daily to my master's store.  
So next time that his lord appeared,  
Upon his hind legs up he reared,  
Setting his hoofs upon his shoulders  
To the dismay of all beholders,  
Then grinned he, and so loudly brayed,  
That the Lord shouted, sore afraid,  
'Hi ! help ! Alack ! the Ass is crazy,  
Beat off this creature, dull and lazy.'

So soundly beaten was his hide,  
 Till he with pain and anguish cried,  
 And to him well-nigh was the cost  
 Of envy, that his life he lost.  
 He, turning to his old estate,  
 Thistles and nettles once more ate,  
 Thankful that he at least was able  
 To lie on bare ground in the stable.  
 And well it were if all of those  
 Whom spiteful envious hearts dispose  
 To grudge of other men's well being,  
 In place of cheerfully agreeing  
 To rest with that which heaven has sent them,  
 And therewith joyfully content them,  
 Were served as was this foolish Ass,  
 And brought unto a like ill pass.  
 Too oft a chance the world affords  
 For asses to become great lords,  
 But ill betides it to the State  
 Whose ship these asses navigate,  
 For of no other thing they heed  
 Than in wealth-gathering to speed.

XXXIII.  
 Reynard's  
 romance.

**H**EAR, too, how as a loving friend,  
 My sire with Tybert Cat did wend,  
 Each swearing that nor love nor hate  
 Their faithful friendship should abate;  
 And whatsoe'er they got of plunder,  
 Strict obligation lay they under,  
 In fair half shares the goods to part;

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Reynard's  
romance.

But as they ready made to start,  
Heard they the hunters in full cry,  
And looking, saw them draw anigh,  
Whereat they both ran helter-skelter,  
Seeking where'er they might for shelter.  
'Tybert,' my father cried, 'Say ye,  
Whither for safety may we flee?'  
Replied the Cat, 'It is agreed,  
Each sticks to each in case of need.'  
'Tybert,' forthwith my father cried,  
'Rest sure that we in safety bide,  
For I a sackful have of wiles,  
Whereof a single one beguiles,  
Of hounds and hunters, the whole pack,  
And though it now and then look black,  
If we but closely hang together,  
Much fiercer storms than this we'll weather.'  
Then Tybert heaved a heavy sigh,  
And cried, 'My only wile I'll try,'  
And therewith clomb into a tree,  
Where well hid by thick leaves was he,  
Safe both from hunter and from hound,  
Leaving my father on the ground,  
Where swift the hounds and hunters go,  
Crying, halloo! and tally ho!  
When Tybert Cat all this beheld,  
With mock and scorn his bosom swelled,  
And cried he, 'Reynard, wiles ye lack,  
Haste! haste ye to unbind your sack,  
Sure ye who be so wondrous wise,

Have need now both of legs and eyes.  
When my dear father heard this mocking,  
Cruel it seemed to him, and shocking,  
That one who'd sworn to be his friend,  
And with him through the world to wend,  
So soon his friendship had outworn,  
Leaving him thus all lone and lorn.  
Nigh came he thus unto his death,  
For weary, worn, and out of breath,  
Soon had he from the earth been swept,  
But for a hole wherein he crept,  
And let the hounds go tearing by,  
While he lay there unheededly.  
'Twas thus that Tybert kept his word  
Comfort and succour to afford,  
So know ye what ye should be at  
Whene'er ye deal with Tybert Cat.  
Alas! how many now are living,  
Who think nought of a promise giving,  
But when you its performance beg,  
They break it as they'd break an egg.  
Thus having known how Tybert lies,  
Wonder ye, if I him despise?  
Yet bear I no ill will, for I,  
Would ever treat him tenderly.  
But should he unto mishap come,  
In life or goods, at hands of some  
Other than me, well, for my part  
I own 'twould not quite break my heart :  
And if he die, or if he live,

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Reynard's  
romance.

XXXIII.  
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romance.

For God's love I his sins forgive,  
Though I can never quite forget  
The ills I at his hands have met.  
Thus flesh and spirit, as ye see,  
Strive in me for the mastery.

**A**LSO within that frame there stood  
A tale I count for wondrous good,  
Of how the Wolf once found the corse,  
Or rather, dry bones of a horse,  
For all the flesh therefrom was eaten,  
But he, not willing to be beaten,  
Swallowed down three or four great bones,  
As tough and dry and hard as stones,  
So greedily, that by ill luck,  
One bone athwart his throat tight stuck,  
And surely as a spear or knife  
That bone had ended the Wolf's life,  
Unless he might some surgeon find,  
Who would with ready hand and kind  
Quit make him of his sore disease,  
And thus his pain and woe appease.  
Great gifts he promised had, in vain,  
When that he happed upon the Crane,  
With lithe long neck, and sturdy bill,  
And prayed his favour and goodwill  
To free his throat thus sorely fettered,  
And vowed he should thenceforth be bettered  
In all his ways of life, if he,  
Helped him in this emergency.

To this the Crane gave ready ear,  
And without show of doubt or fear,  
Thrust his head down the fierce Wolf's throat,  
And in less time than one could note,  
He with his bill plucked forth the bone,  
And the Wolf's dire disease was gone.  
Started the Wolf in wrath aside,  
And with a voice of thunder cried,  
'How now! What mean ye then by this?  
I thought my head was off, ywis!  
Had this been done by any other,  
Not thus would I my anger smother.'  
Replied the Crane, 'Sir Isegrym,  
Ye find ye now in happy trim,  
So will ye of your kind regard,  
Your promise keep of good reward?'  
'What!' cried the Wolf, 'Ye ask of me,  
That I reward should give to thee  
For putting me to grievous pain,  
Prithee, dost think I am insane?  
Forget ye then my great forbearance,  
That without let or interference,  
Right down my throat ye put your head?  
Thank ye your stars ye are not dead;  
And for my kind consideration  
Ye ask me now for compensation!  
If any one should seek amends,  
'Tis I, or we're no longer friends.'  
Thus do unkind men nowadays  
Toward those who claim due meed and praise.

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Reynard's  
romance.

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

So stands the proverb true I trow,  
'He who would chide should clean hands show.'  
All this within the frame was wrought,  
And much more that escapeth thought,  
He that ordained it was right cunning,  
His wit throughout all knowledge running,  
And in all science so profound,  
That not within the world's wide round,  
Could wight once more form such a jewel,  
Its loss beyond all thought is cruel,  
And though I owned the whole creation  
I'd risk it for its restoration.  
This lovely mirror was so rare,  
So precious, and past all compare,  
That in no hands should it be seen  
Than yours, most noble King and Queen,  
An heir-loom for this royal stem  
Should be this wondrous priceless gem.  
Within the world few men live now  
Who on their Lords such gifts bestow.  
When from my house went forth this glass,  
Good Lord ! what yammering there was !  
My wife said nought could e'er atone,  
She loved but it, and it alone,  
While all my children howled and cried,  
That that they loved and nought beside,  
For in it they were wont to study  
Their coats so sleek and smooth and ruddy,  
And ever on a festal day  
They judged therein of their array.

Poor Cuwaert,—little thought I then  
 How near his day of death was!—when  
 I handed him this precious treasure,  
 And he received it with such pleasure,  
 And started off with Bellyn Ram,  
 Saying, ‘Now justly proud I am  
 That I such precious jewels carry,  
 Haste thee then, Bellyn, wherefore tarry?’  
 My Lord, my best friends were those two,  
 And deep regard they had for you.  
 You, gracious King, my horror share  
 ‘Gainst Cuwaert’s cruel murderer,  
 And I will tramp the whole world over  
 But what I will at last discover  
 The villain who hath done this deed,  
 And vengeance wreak on his foul head.  
 I trust that not within this Court  
 Standeth a man of such ill sort;  
 Yet, my good Lord, pray who can tell?  
 For he who did this murder fell,  
 Is not the man to tell his crime;  
 Yet runs the proverb from all time,  
 ‘Murder will out,’ and so I trust,  
 Once more we’ll prove that proverb just.  
 There is one thing that me astounds  
 Beyond all measure, way, and bounds,  
 Which is, if I well understood,  
 Ye said that never any good  
 Was by my father or by me  
 Done to your gracious Majesty :

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 romance.

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

I trow it is, so many things  
Are ever brought before great Kings  
That matters, e'en of moment, slip,  
Sometimes from out their memory's grip.  
Pardon, great King, therefore, if I  
Recall unto your memory  
Some matters which I fain would save  
From burial in oblivion's grave.  
Dear Lord, remember ye not, when,  
Your father, wisest among men,  
Still lived, and ye a youngling were,  
Exceeding not your second year,  
My father from Montpelier came,  
Where he had gathered wondrous fame,  
For foremost there was reckoned he  
In medicine and pharmacy.  
The properties of herbs he knew,  
And what therewith to make or do,  
Also their various names, and if  
They were viscose or laxatif.  
A gown of silk he wore by right,  
Encinctured by a girdle bright  
All fairly gilt, which showed that he  
Was master of chirurgery.  
Sore grieved was he within his heart,  
That his Lord failed with sickness' smart,  
For loved he him above all lords,  
More than can e'er be told in words.  
Then quoth your father, 'Reynard, I  
Feel that my hour of death draws nigh,

Unless that thou shouldst find some cure,  
 Speedy in action as 'tis sure.'  
 'My Lord,' quoth he, 'will ye be whole,  
 Made free of sickness, pain and dole,  
 Then must ye follow my direction  
 With strictest care and circumspection.  
 One thing alone can be the giver  
 Of health to thee, which is the liver  
 Ta'en from a wolf of seven year old,  
 Not stiff, and hard, and dead, and cold,  
 But fresh and clear, with ne'er a spot,  
 Plucked from his body reeking hot.'  
 The Wolf stood by, but spake no word;  
 With fear aghast, he never stirred  
 Till that your father called to him,  
 'What say ye then, Sir Isegrym?  
 The great physician's words ye hear,  
 That I of sickness may be clear  
 If I at once your liver eat;'  
 Replied the Wolf, 'I'd gladly meet  
 Your wishes, but my years are five,  
 No longer have I been alive,  
 Though you should count it to a day.'  
 My father cried, 'Away, away,  
 Open him, and I soon shall know  
 Whether his liver serve or no.'  
 So to the kitchen haled was he,  
 And opened there right speedily.  
 Straightway the King his liver ate;  
 And forthwith, joyful and elate,

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romance.

Uprose he from his bed of sickness,  
And henceforth grew a wondrous thickness  
Of friendship 'twixt your sire and mine,  
As knew nor limit nor confine,  
And 'twas ordained that henceforth he  
As 'Master Reynard' known should be.  
Then bode he ever with the King,  
Good was his word in everything,  
Heed gave they unto all he said,  
And ever on his reverend head  
He wore a garland of sweet roses :  
Alas, my Lord, the tale here closes,  
Or quite another way is turned ;  
Good men in these new times are spurned,  
And the false shrews set up on high  
By base deceit and villainy.  
Alas ! how many among us  
Be men low born and ravenous.  
To please the powers they smile and smirk,  
Seeking their ill designs to work,  
But if they saw their prince have need,  
Little would they avail or heed.  
They'd let their Lord die in a ditch,  
So they might thus themselves enrich.  
E'en as the Wolf unmoved stood by,  
Willing to see thy father die,  
Rather than he to him would give  
His liver that he whole might live,  
So you, great Sir, in pain might linger,  
Ere one of these would stir a finger ;

Far different 'tis with me, for I  
Would see wolves by the dozen die  
With light heart, for your majesty.  
All this, my Lord, happed in your youth,  
Since when, ill tongues have poisoned truth,  
And ye, too, let oblivion creep  
O'er my good deeds—well, let them sleep ;  
'Tis not for me to say what I  
Have done of good and courtesy  
To ye and yours, full well I know  
The bounden service that I owe,  
And freely will that service give,  
Heedless if I or die or live.

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Reynard's  
romance.

**M**Y Lord, I mind me of a time  
When ye were in your early prime,  
So happed it, ye were out a walking,  
And with our gracious Queen were talking,  
When suddenly ye chanced to see  
Me with the Wolf in company,  
Who having just seized on a swine,  
Prepared us there and then to dine.  
After a friendly salutation,  
You hinted that an invitation  
To make a party to the feast  
Would not offend you in the least,  
And also that our gracious Queen,  
Suffered, like you, with hunger keen.  
Isegrym answered, with a mumble,  
Something about ' Your servant humble,'

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But I spake out with right good will,  
Saying, " My Lord, we but fulfil  
Our duties when we beg that you,  
If that it please ye so to do,  
Will of your graciousness sit here  
And join us in our humble cheer.'  
In spite of all that I could say,  
Isægrym carried one half away,  
And next the festival made shorter  
By gobbling up another quarter,  
Leaving a wretched share between  
Yourself and our most gracious Queen,  
Whilst I had nought but half the lungs.  
Wise men will ever curb their tongues  
Before their betters, therefore I  
Made light of the indignity,  
But for thus stealing my just share  
May the foul fiend of him have care.  
The Wolf thus showed his ill condition,  
And his vile, greedy disposition.  
Your share was but a tickle-tongue,  
And ere a " Credo " could be sung  
'Twas gone, and you and our fair Queen  
Still suffered hunger, as I ween,  
And, just to keep the Wolf in awe,  
Ye lifted up your royal paw  
And gave him 'twixt the ears a tap  
That tore the skin and made it lap  
Over his eyes, and with the smart  
He howled, and right away did dart,

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

And after him ye cried and said,  
' Well art thou of thy greed apaid,  
Bring ye more food and deal it well,  
Or a worse tale ye'll have to tell.'  
Then said I, ' Gracious Lord, so please you,  
I of your hunger soon will ease you ; '  
And so a fine fat calf I brought,  
Which I for your behoof had caught.  
And when ye saw the well-fed calf,  
Most graciously ye pleased to laugh,  
Crying, ' Your hunting hath been swift,  
Well pleased am I at your good thrift,  
Thou art the one to send at need,  
Seeing how manfully ye speed ;  
Now is it yours to deal it out  
More fairly than that greedy lout.'  
' My Lord,' quoth I, ' with right good will,  
Hereby, I trust, ye'll have your fill.'  
For you, my Lord, one half I dight,  
As being yours of royal right ;  
Then handed I an equal share  
Unto your gracious lady fair,  
The inwards, liver and lungs dealt I  
To your illustrious family ;  
Unto the Wolf I threw the head,  
And, as became a man well bred,  
Unto myself I dealt the feet ;  
Pardon me, Sire, if I repeat  
The gracious words that then ye spake :  
' Reynard,' said you, ' ye surely make

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

A skilful carver ; who taught ye  
To deal herewith so courteously ?'  
'Sire,' I replied, ' the Wolf's red crown  
Hath unto me a lesson shown,  
He thought to leave his Lord to dine  
On a mere remnant of a swine,  
And justly this plight he is in,  
Of bleeding head and broken skin.'  
My Lord, it oft haps nowadays,  
That wolves have worship, wealth, and praise,  
But woe be to the towns and land  
Where'er wolves have the overhand.  
My Lord, I fear ye be o'ersated  
With these past tales that I've related ;  
But I would keep your memory green  
Of the fast friends we once have been.  
In times gone by, within this Court,  
Whose counsel before mine was sought ?  
And of what other man the word  
Was ever before mine preferred ?  
My Lord, let be, if any here  
Can prove, by witness sound and clear,  
That I have trespassed against thee,  
Then let there be an end of me ;  
But if on closest quest ye find  
That I am cruelly maligned,  
Then once again I'll raise my head,  
And with firm step before thee tread,  
As one who holds his Sovereign's grace,  
And need not shame to show his face."

As Reynard finished his oration,  
He sat down with an affectation  
Of injured innocence, as though  
He could not to a goose say "bo!"

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

**T**HE King had hearkened to the whole  
Of all his specious rigmarole,  
With marked attention, as though he  
Took it for gospel verity.  
"Reynard," quoth he, "ye speak in season;  
Your words, I trow, are words of reason,  
Of Cuwaert's death I know no more  
Than that which hath been told before,  
How Bellyn hither brought his head,  
Proving most surely he was dead.  
But witnesses I must allow  
'Gainst you are lacking, and I trow  
Ye surely therefore must go quit,  
For never were it just or fit  
To judge you guilty of his death  
Upon a mere suspicion's breath."  
"Dear Lord," quoth Reynard, "surely well  
Herein ye do. Oh! could ye tell  
How my poor bosom's torn with grief  
For Cuwaert's death, and what relief  
It is to me to know that you  
Feel sure I set no hand thereto,  
Then would your mind be much affected,  
To think your friend you e'er suspected.  
Alas! when Bellyn and the Hare

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

Bade me adieu, e'en then and there  
I swooned away with grief and sorrow,  
Surely, a token of the morrow  
And its sad happening it was  
That caused me lie upon the grass  
For two long hours, as one who ne'er  
With this world more shall have affair."

**M**OST part of those who, standing by,  
Heard Reynard's words and piteous cry,  
Though they trowed not in him at first,  
Yet when they saw such sorrow burst  
Forth from his eyes in copious flow,  
They deemed none could such anguish show  
Unless his bosom had been torn  
With grief, and with a sense forlorn  
Of loss of friends and loss of treasure,  
Such as must wound him past all measure.  
The King and Queen would calm his fears,  
Saying, "Take heart, and dry thy tears,  
And let us set at once about  
To seek these jewels, and find out  
Wherever on the earth they're hid."  
For King and Queen could not quite rid  
Themselves of the belief that they  
Might win these jewels some fine day :  
With an unheard, perverse insistence  
They quite believed in their existence,  
And hoped, by help of Reynard Fox,  
To have them in their jewel box.

Reynard at once read all their heart,  
And little cared he, for his part,  
Whether they thought or that or this,  
So that it served his business;  
Of love or fear he was exempt,  
Having for them profound contempt.  
“Thanks,” quoth he, “noble Dame and Lord,  
That ye such kindly word afford,  
To comfort me in my distress,  
For I must honestly confess,  
That never in my life have I  
Endured such woe and misery.  
Rest ye assured that day by day  
I ne’er shall cease to search, and pray,  
To beg, to threaten, and demand,  
Through every house, in every land,  
Till those sweet jewels come to hand.  
And if perchance, when they are found,  
Within some stronghold they be bound,  
So that nor prayer nor threat avail,  
Then trust I that ye will not fail,  
Ever at need to lend to me  
Your power and great authority.  
For as the treasure shall be thine  
E’en in such wise as it is mine,  
So truly is it yours indeed  
To punish murder, theft, and greed,  
Which some have practised e’er that they  
Could these fair jewels bear away.”  
“Reynard, be sure,” the King replied,

XXXIII.  
Reynard’s  
romance.

XXXIII.  
Reynard's  
romance.

“ 'Twill ever be my joy and pride  
To raise all powers of heaven and earth  
To rescue jewels of such worth.”  
Now grinned the Fox with jubilation,  
As master of the situation.  
No one like him in all the land  
Had got the King so well in hand,  
And such good case he found him in  
As he had scarce dared hope to win.  
Now were his lies so well received,  
That all the world he had deceived,  
And no one dared speak ill of him,  
Except his old foe, Isegrym,  
Who once more raised his voice and cried :

**M**Y Lord, is justice then denied,  
And credence given to this shrew,  
Who with gross lies deceiveth you ?  
In faith, my Lord, it will be long  
Ere me he counts his friends among ;  
In murder, treason, theft, and lies,  
Wrapt is he to the very eyes.  
Of honour hath he not a trace,  
But mocks ye right before your face.  
List now the tale that I forth tell,  
And once more know this villain fell.



XXXIV. HOW ISEGRYM  
THE WOLF COMPLAINED  
AGAIN ON THE FOX  
\* \* \* \* \*

**M**Y Lord, I feel well nigh afraid  
To tell you how this Fox betrayed  
My dearest wife, lest ye should think  
That I wished justice to hoodwink  
By piling up a monstrous tale,  
And thus against my foe prevail.  
But, my Lord, every word I say  
Will stand until the judgment-day,  
For my sad story, every whit,  
Is true as 'twere in Gospel writ.  
'Twas thus, upon a winter's night  
When frost was sharp, and stars shone bright,  
My wife with Reynard Fox did take  
Her way beside a frozen lake.  
Quoth he, ' Dame Ersewyn, would it not  
Be nice if we some fish had got ?  
'Twould not be difficult to catch them,  
For if you'd fish, then I could snatch them.  
See here now, a clear open space,  
Suppose therein your tail you place,  
And when a fish begins to bite,  
And 'tween his teeth the hairs stick tight,  
You'll whisk him out upon the ice,  
And I'll secure him in a trice.'

XXXIV.  
The Wolf  
new cries.

XXXIV.  
The Wolf  
new cries.

My wife was pleased with the suggestion,  
And of his good faith made no question,  
But on the ice she gaily tripped,  
And in a hole her tail she dipped ;  
There patiently she sat awhile,  
Till Reynard's face assumed a smile,  
And only a few minutes after  
He burst into unseemly laughter,  
And giving her an ugly shove,  
Cried out, ' Dame Ersewyn, why not move ?  
It looks as though the fish won't bite.  
How now ! your tail seems frozen tight !  
She tugged, she strained, but the firm ice  
Held her as tight as iron vice.  
Then, she fixed there as by a tether,  
Reynard picked up a wild-goose feather,  
Wherewith he tickled her poor face,  
With cruel gibe and ill grimace,  
Till she with shame and irritation  
Was driven almost to desperation.  
Then with his dirty paws her chaps  
He smites, with stinging blows and slaps.  
Crying, ' How like you fishing, pray ?  
I hope you've got your fill to-day.'  
Myself, I witnessed from the bank  
This foul offence and insult rank,  
Arriving just in nick of time  
With mine own eyes to see the crime ;  
Which drove me almost into fits,  
And well nigh cost me my five wits.

But when the wretch saw me appear,  
Away he slunk in dastard fear,  
And only did my shouts requite  
With an insulting long-nose sight.  
Long was it ere I could avail  
To free from ice my poor wife's tail,  
And left she, ere I could unbind her,  
A gobbet of her tail behind her.  
So cried and yelped she for the smart,  
It caused the village folk to start  
From out their beds, and running come  
With pitchforks, bills, and staves, and some  
Were armed with flails and long sharp knives,  
That risk we ran to lose our lives.  
'Slay! slay!' they cried, 'beat, slash, and smite,'  
And but for the dark friendly night,  
Which happened to be black as soot,  
A villain who was swift of foot,  
And armed was with a monstrous pike,  
Of which I never saw the like,  
Most surely both of us had slain,  
And we, my Lord, should ne'er again  
Have seen your gracious face, unless  
Kind heaven had favoured our distress,  
And made the folk all round to ramble,  
While we lay hid within a bramble,  
And so at last gave o'er the chase,  
Leaving us in our lurking-place.  
Mark well, my Lord, this foul affair,  
Fraud, murder, treason, all are there.

XXXIV.  
The Wolf  
new cries,

XXXIV.  
The Wolf  
new cries.

Wonder you, then, that I be willing  
To witness this vile Fox's killing?"

**G**OOD Lord!" cried Reynard, "were this true,  
My life indeed had gone askew,  
But you will hear, without surprise,  
This tale a tissue is of lies;  
For well ye know with what small ruth  
The Wolf will bid adieu to truth,  
And his base interests to advance,  
Will launch forth into wild romance.  
Now listen to my simple statement,  
And you will then know what abatement  
To make from this absurd narration  
The Wolf gives of his tribulation.  
'Twas thus : Dame Ersewyn said, 'I wish,  
Reynard, ye'd teach me to catch fish.'  
'With pleasure,' quoth I, 'if ye'll do  
Exactly what I show to you.'  
But soon as ever I began  
Of catching fish to show the plan,  
Small heed she gave what it might be,  
But at a tangent off went she,  
Sticking her tail in through the ice,  
Quite contrary to my advice.  
But as it was, she had her wish,  
And soon had caught no end of fish ;  
But she for hours would there abide,  
And never could be satisfied,  
Until her tail got frozen tight ;

Then I, with all my main and might,  
Most tenderly would help her out,  
When all at once I heard a shout,  
And, looking up, the Wolf I saw  
Glower down on me with hungry maw,  
And therefore beat a swift retreat,  
Ere he made of me dinner-meat.  
And thus, I think, I've clearly shown  
How plain a tale will put him down.  
My Lord, whate'er before I've said,  
This, swear I by your sacred head,  
Is true as words of holy writ,  
As such you may rely on it.  
Not for ten thousand marks of gold  
Should any lie by me be told ;  
My ancestors from days long past  
The truth have held, hard, firm, and fast.  
What have I with the Wolf to do ?  
It makes me shudder through and through,  
To think with such a villain beast  
I e'er consorted in the least.  
If ye would know him, Sovereign mine,  
Think of his parting of the swine,  
How three parts for himself he carved  
While you and our good Queen were starved.  
But see, here stands Dame Ersewyn,  
The same tale, as I trow, she'll spin ;  
If so, she then speaks true and well,  
But if another tale she tell,  
Then shall I scorn her wicked lie,

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The Wolf  
new cries.

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The Wolf  
new cries.

And quite disdain to make reply.”  
Quoth Ersewyn, as she choked with ire,  
Which from her eyes flashed forth like fire,  
“ Ah ! villain of the deepest dye,  
If so it only were that I  
Knew how to bring you unto book,  
By any sort of hook or crook,  
I'd make you swing just ten feet higher  
For a false, base, deceitful liar.  
Listen, my Lord, in what base way  
He served me but the other day.

A WELL, but just outside the town,  
Is worked with buckets, up and down,  
By pulleys, and when one's atop  
Straightway the other goes down flop.  
Passing one day this well anear,  
Deep sighs and sobs assailed mine ear,  
And looking down, there saw I sit  
Reynard at bottom of the pit,  
Within the bucket, while that he  
Did cry and whine most piteously.  
I asked him how he thither came,  
And he hatcht up some story lame,  
Saying he but his folly curst  
For eating fish till nigh to burst,  
Which he within the well had caught,  
Which was with fish most richly fraught.  
Quoth I, ‘ Dear Reynard, let me know  
In what way I can friendship show,

To help thee in thine hour of need.'  
'Dear Aunt,' quoth he, 'I prithee speed,  
Spring in the bucket there on high,'  
So did I, and he up did fly,  
While I unto the bottom fell,  
And there sat helpless in the well.  
Then sprang he forth and went his way,  
Leaving me there the live-long day,  
Starving with hunger, cold and wet,  
And long 'twas ere I thence could get.  
But just before his starting off  
He gibed at me with cruel scoff,  
Crying, 'Dear Aunt, 'twas always so,  
Up and down in the world men go,'  
But recked he no more of my trouble  
Than heeds he of a water bubble."  
The Fox hereat laughed loud and long,  
And cried, "Dear Aunt, your language strong  
Doth show but small appreciation  
Of my most kind consideration ;  
To you a lesson sound I taught,  
So that ye'll not again be caught,  
And nevermore I trust will ye  
Believe a man too hastily;  
For be he brother, eme, or friend,  
Each man but seeks his private end,  
And hold I him but lean of wit  
Who lacks the skill to compass it."

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The Wolf  
new cries.



XXXV. A FAIR FABLE  
OF THE FOX AND THE  
WOLF

XXXV.  
The Ape's  
pleasance.

**D**AME ERSEWYN cried, "This Fox will glose  
From off one's face the very nose,  
And talk until one truly feels

Doubt if one stands on head or heels,  
With every wind that blows he changes,  
And all around the compass ranges."  
Quoth Isegrym, "I've been begirt  
By him through life with scathe and hurt;  
One time a cunning scheme he laid,  
Whereby I basely was betrayed  
Into the hands of a Mercatte;  
Hair-breadth's escape had I from that,  
Being in greatest dread and fear,  
And losing more than half mine ear  
The Fox may say how it befel,  
For knoweth he the story well,  
And howsoe'er I shape my tongue,  
He's bound to say I speak it wrong."  
Cried the Fox, "Yes," as glib as butter,  
"I'll tell it without trip or stutter,  
And if with truth I do not deal,  
Break me alive upon the wheel.  
Isegrym met I in the wood,  
And, as his wont is, there he stood

Complaining of his famished state,  
 Which no meat seemeth to abate,  
 For he for food doth ever hanker,  
 Yet daily leaner grows and lanker,  
 Though he consumes five times at least  
 More food than any other beast.  
 His hunger seems to know no law,  
 No provender can fill his maw;  
 To guess exceedeth quite my powers  
 Whence comes the meat that he devours.  
 Look! even now upon his face  
 Grows of grim hunger a grimace;  
 But I must straight unto my tale,  
 Ere that your royal patience fail.  
 I pity took on his complaint,  
 Seeing him weary look and faint,  
 And said, 'Let's hunt the woods, and try  
 If we may come some meat thereby.'  
 And ever still he cried and whined,  
 Saying, 'To hunt have I no mind.'  
 But speering round, eftsoons I saw  
 A big hole 'neath an ancient haw,  
 And therein heard a rushing sound,  
 That seemed to shake the very ground.  
 Quoth I, 'Dear Isegrym, see here,  
 This promiseth, perchance, good cheer,  
 Go in, ye'll something find I wot,'  
 'Reynard,' quoth he, 'I'd rather not,  
 No, not indeed for untold pounds,  
 Would I go whence come those dread sounds,

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 The Ape's  
 pleasance.

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The Ape's  
pleasance.

But while I sit beneath this brake,  
Suppose you an inspection make,  
And tell me what therein you find,  
That would now be an action kind,  
You'd manage better far than I,  
So skilled art thou in subtlety.'  
See ye, my Lord, how me, poor wight,  
He'd set the foremost in the fight,  
Making me a cat's-paw for him,  
Big though he be, and strong of limb,  
While I am delicate and slender,  
And of a constitution tender.  
I suffered there of dread and pain  
Much more than I'd go through again  
For all the wealth within your realm,  
So doth its thought my memory whelm.  
However, in I boldly went,  
By a long, dark, and deep descent,  
Till at a turn there burst a light,  
Making the cave all clear and bright,  
And therein lay a monstrous ape,  
Of giant form and hideous shape,  
With saucer eyes that glymmed as fire,  
And whiskers that stuck out like wire,  
Her great mouth with long teeth was set,  
And her claws such as none forget  
Who once have known them, so that I  
Felt in the greatest jeopardy.  
The ugly creature that there sat  
I deemed a baboon or Mercatte,

And by her lay her children three,  
Fouler if possible than she.  
All four stared on me with fierce gape,  
And scarcely thought I to escape,  
But saw at once my plan must be  
To speak them fair and civilly.  
So quoth I, 'Madam, a good morrow,  
Your lovely children seem to borrow  
Their mother's fair and winsome features,  
Ne'er saw I more enchanting creatures;  
What limbs! what noses! and what eyes!  
It is indeed a sweet surprise  
To find ye thus, and trust ye'll grant  
A kiss to one who calls you aunt.'  
'Dear nephew Reynard,' she replied,  
Nothing in all the world beside  
Could give me greater satisfaction  
Than this most kind and courteous action  
Of making me such friendly call;  
Your name and fame are known to all,  
And for your wisdom most profound,  
Your knowledge and your judgment sound,  
The whole world through thou art renowned.  
Most grievously my heart deplores  
My children are not taught like yours,  
Pray would you, as a near relation,  
Superintend their education?'  
Right glad was I that thus I'd bought  
Her good will, by the happy thought  
To call her aunt, for truly she

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The Ape's  
pleasance.

XXXV.  
The Ape's  
pleasance.

Was no way aunt or sib to me;  
My own dear aunt by nature's law,  
Stands there, the good Dame Rukenawe.  
'Dear Aunt,' quoth I, 'my life and good,  
And all I have of livelihood,  
Are ever at your disposition,  
Pray use them at your own volition.  
And as for your most flattering speech,  
Wishing I should your children teach,  
Such honour 'tis to me, that I,  
Accept the charge most joyfully.'  
The stench that from these creatures rose  
Caused me to cough and hold my nose,  
And cast about for some pretence  
Whereby I might escape from thence.  
Then I remembered that outside  
The Wolf with hunger almost died.  
'Dear Aunt,' quoth I, 'I deeply grieve  
That I forthwith must take my leave,  
But a dear friend outside doth wait,  
Whose hunger I would fain abate,  
Your sweet self and your children fair  
I'll mention in my vesper prayer.'  
Cried she, 'Ye'll surely stay and eat,  
We have some most delicious meat,  
And I should reckon it unkind  
Were ye to leave it all behind  
Untasted, ever 'tis agreed  
That Mercattes well know how to feed.'  
So rose she up, and took me then

Into another cave or den,  
Where were piled up such heaps of food  
As never, swear I by the rood,  
Saw I in all my life before ;  
Pheasants and rabbits by the score,  
And partridges, and harts, and roes,  
In fact all manner meat that goes  
To gladden up the heart of man.  
Quoth I, ' Dear aunt, I think I can  
Just pick a little bit,' and I  
Fell to and ate right lustily ;  
Till I with feeding was replete,  
And felt 'twas time to make retreat.  
' Then,' said the Ape, ' you will, I pray,  
Take just whate'er you please away.  
Pray carry with you this half hind,  
Dame Ermelyne will think it kind,  
Beg her acceptance for my sake,  
With whatso else you please to take.'  
When I got out, there Isegrym  
Lay on the ground in sorry trim:  
His head he feebly raised, and said,  
' Alas ! alas ! I'm well nigh dead !  
But stay, I see you have provision,  
Let's make thereof a fair division.'  
' Take all,' I cried, with noble air,  
' To you I render up my share.'  
That sounded well, for he knew not  
That I a bellyful had got.

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The Ape's  
pleasance.

XXXV.  
The Ape's  
pleasance.

**W**HAT risk I ran for his behoof,  
Here have ye, as I wot, good proof,  
Yet now but little thank he maketh,

But old scores up against me raketh !  
Soon as the hind was down his throat,  
Quoth he, 'Dear Reynard, did ye note  
If there was other food therein ?  
For still, ye see, hangs loose my skin,  
And that half hind was but enough  
My appetite to edge and rough.'  
Quoth I, 'If ye with judgment try,  
No end of food may ye come by,  
But ye will make a sorry matter  
Unless ye wheedle, lie, and flatter,  
For if ye speak plain truth, I wot  
Ye'll find the dwelling somewhat hot.'  
My lord, thus was he fairly warned,  
And if my good advice he scorned,  
Who was to blame ? I plainly ask,  
Should I, therefore, be ta'en to task ?  
But rude rough beasts can never see  
How good a thing is subtlety.  
Yet said he that he would go in,  
And tell such lies through thick and thin,  
That all the world might stand and wonder ;  
Hear now, my lord, his stupid blunder.  
When first he entered, there he found  
The Mercatte sitting on the ground,  
With her three imps all grim and ghastly,  
Whereat he shook and trembled vastly,

And cried, 'What mortal but would fear  
 Such spawn of hell as I see here?  
 Of hideousness they are the crown,  
 Fit only to hang, burn, and drown.'  
 Quoth the Mercatte, 'Wherefore d'ye growl,  
 Whether my whelps be fair or foul?  
 Came one before you of their kin,  
 Who said they looked like cherubin;  
 I wot he better knew than ye  
 Whether or foul or fair they be.'  
 Quoth he, 'Thereof I'll not dispute,  
 While I feel hunger so acute,  
 But tell me, have ye in your dwelling  
 Some provender, for gift or selling?  
 If so, 'twere better mine by rights,  
 Than to be spent on these vile wights.  
 Then with an angry look and wild,  
 He ran towards where the meat was piled,  
 And soon as that the Mercatte saw,  
 She rushed on him with tooth and claw,  
 And in her train her children three,  
 Who all laid on right merrily,  
 And e'er he could himself turn round,  
 They had him down upon the ground;  
 No matter how he roared and kicked,  
 Into his eyes their tails they flicked,  
 They bit, they scratched, they thumped, they tore,  
 Till, sick at heart and body sore,  
 At length he managed to get clear,  
 Losing no more than half an ear.

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 The Ape's  
 pleasure.

XXXV.  
The Ape's  
pleasance.

When he came forth, he howled and moaned,  
And his most evil plight bemoaned.  
Quoth I, 'Pray did ye lie to rights?'  
Quoth he, 'I saw but hideous wights,  
And as I found them so I spake.'  
Quoth I, 'When will ye lesson take,  
And speak all men as needs may be,  
With wisdom, craft, and subtlety?  
Ye should have said, 'Fair niece, good day,  
And are these your sweet children, pray?  
To have of offspring such a treasure  
Must make ye happy beyond measure.  
How proud and happy should I be  
Could I boast such a family.'  
Quoth he, 'I rather would go hang,  
Than thus to speak to such a gang.'  
Quoth I, 'Ye must expect such payment,  
Unless of lies ye make your raiment  
When ye have with such folks to deal,  
For worth of truth they ne'er can feel.'  
Clearly, my lord, this tale doth show,  
Why the wolf with one ear doth go.  
There stands he, looking meek and mild  
As looks a naked new-born child,  
Yet in his heart, all beasts know well,  
His hunger fierce prompts murder fell,  
And, for my love, he bears towards me  
Undying hate and enmity.  
My plain true tale he can't deny,  
Told forth so circumstantially."



·XXXVJ· HOW· I SEGRYM·  
·PROFFERED· HIS· GLOVE·  
·TO· THE· FOX· TO· FIGHT·  
·WITH· HIM· \* · \* · \*

**R**EPLIED the Wolf, "My indignation  
Against this lying false oration  
I will restrain, for ever yet,

XXXVI.  
The Wolf  
defies.

Where lies against fair truth are set,  
A many folk will still confide  
In that which is the worser side,  
And by ill luck, I have no witness  
To prove my words are words of fitness  
To upset your scorns and mocks,  
Thou venomous and ill-bred Fox.  
Ye helped me in my need, ye said,  
When I for hunger was nigh dead,  
But well ye know 'twas but a bone,  
Of flesh as bare as any stone,  
Ye gave unto me, when that I  
Was in such dire necessity.  
And then with what false words and spite  
Would ye my reputation blight,  
Saying the King's life I conspired,  
With envy and ambition fired,  
And that I would sedition sow,  
With treasure hid in Hulsterlo.  
Then have ye poisoned my whole life  
With your vile treatment of my wife,

XXXVI.  
The Wolf  
defies.

But now is come the reckoning day,  
When you for these foul crimes shall pay.  
Before my Lord, I here proclaim  
Your unheard villainy and shame,  
As traitor false and murderer base,  
Whom true men from the world should chase.  
This will I on thy body prove,  
And thereto cast I down my glove;  
Take thou it up that we may meet  
Within the lists, and I entreat  
His gracious majesty to see  
That right is done 'twixt thee and me,  
Either thou shalt submit, or I  
Will know the wherefore and the why.”  
The Fox through all his body shivered,  
And every nerve within him quivered;  
Thought he, the time is come at last,  
When all my schemes and wiles are past,  
For well I know, I ne'er can stand  
'Gainst Isegrym, fair hand to hand.



XXXVII. HOW THE FOX  
TOOK UP THE GLOVE, AND  
HOW THE KING SET THEM  
A DAY AND FIELD FOR TO  
COME AND DO BATTLE.

XXXVII.  
The Fox  
must fight.

**B**UT, thought the Fox, I yet may beat him,  
There are so many ways to cheat him,  
The Wolf's forefeet have lost their claws,  
Tender and soft must be his paws.

And though his limbs may be much stronger,  
I think my art will last much longer.  
Then cried he boldly, "Let him come,  
With sound of trump and roll of drum.  
Who basely dares to call me traitor,  
He sooner shall find out or later  
That better had he ne'er been born  
Than thus to treat the Fox with scorn ;  
I say that such doth basely lie,  
And, Isegrym, thou specially.  
This one thing have I oft required,  
And ever in my heart desired,  
To prove all false thou dost allege,  
And hereto lay I down my pledge ;  
Now then, by combat thou abyest,  
And plainly will I prove thou liest.  
My soul is longing for the fray  
And sorely shalt thou rue the day."  
Thus with big words did he dissemble,  
Yet felt his knees beneath him tremble.  
Then did the King each pledge receive,  
For the high battle granting leave,  
And each foe gave two men to borrow  
Of his appearance on the morrow.  
For Isegrym the borrows were  
Tybert the Cat, and Bruin Bear,  
While Reynard Fox no surety lacks,  
With Bitelives, and friend Grymbert Dachs.

XXXVII.  
The Fox  
must fight.



XXXVIIJ HOW DAME RUKEN-  
AWE THE SHE-APPE COUNSEL-  
LED THE FOX OF THE WAY HE  
SHOULD BEHAVE HIM IN THE  
FIELD AGAINST THE WOLF A

XXXVIII.  
Dame  
Rukenawe's  
shield.

QUOTH the She-Ape, with air sedate,  
Laying her hand on Reynard's pate,  
"Nephew, be learned in wisdom's school,  
And keep ye ever calm and cool.

Your uncle taught me once a prayer,  
Which knowing, one may combat dare,  
And be he wrong or be he right,  
Success shall crown him in the fight.  
The prayer was made long years ago,  
By one who did all mysteries know,  
Abbot was he of Bondelo,  
And clerk had been long years before,  
To the great Bishop Prendelor.  
Quoth he, 'Who saith this prayer devoutly,  
Fasting, shall bear him well and stoutly,  
And though strong glaives around him rattle  
That day shall he prevail in battle.'  
Away, therefore, with dread and sorrow,  
This prayer I'll teach you for the morrow,  
And when ye fall on Isegrym,  
Short work ye'll surely make of him."  
Quoth Reynard to his Aunt, "I render  
Abundant thanks for your most tender  
And helpful counsel in this duel,

Where I must join in combat cruel,  
With this ferocious angry foe;  
Most gladly this fair prayer I'd know,  
It is a blessing unexpected,  
To be by holy words protected."  
Then Reynard's lineage all day long  
Whiled time away with jest and song,  
And kept his sinking spirits up  
With merry tale and brimming cup.  
Dame Rukenawe set her wits to work,  
How Reynard Fox with grace might shirk  
A plain, straightforward, stand-up fight,  
And yet might put the Wolf to flight.  
So first his fell did she despoil  
Of every hair, and then with oil  
His body thoroughly anointed,  
So should his foe be disappointed  
Of having him within his grip,  
For he could wriggle, slide, and slip,  
And never would the Wolf be able  
To hold a creature so unstable.  
"And too," quoth she, "I have in mind  
A plan to send your foeman blind,  
So that he shall at random scuffle,  
While from his grip you shift and shuffle.  
See here, a pot of sharpest eisel,  
Soak your tail in it, and reprisal  
You thus upon the Wolf may take,  
Causing his eyes to smart and ache.  
For when ye first meet face to face,

XXXVIII.  
Dame  
Rukenawe's  
shield.

XXXVIII. Show not of fear the slightest trace,  
 Dame But, just as he to strike you tries,  
 Rukenawe's Whisk round your tail across his eyes,  
 shield. And he, o'erwhelmed with smart and pain,  
 Will forego to strike back again,  
 But strive, 'fore all, his eyes to clear,  
 Then may you safely get anear,  
 And leap on to his back, while he  
 Will skeer about in agony.  
 Then, 'twixt the wind and him you must  
 Run back and scratch up such a dust  
 That all his sight will be encumbered  
 With particles of sand unnumbered ;  
 And, as chance offers, never fail  
 Into his eyes to whisk your tail ;  
 Then skip about, light, blithe, and cheery,  
 Until the Wolf gets worn and weary,  
 And, as ye wot, his feet are sore,  
 So shall ye make him run the more.  
 This proverb he'll find true at length  
 That 'Cunning weigheth more than strength.'  
 Thus heeding my instructions, ye  
 Shall win a glorious victory.  
 But hear the mystic words and dark  
 I learned of the great Bishop's clerk ;  
 Kneel down while on thy head I lay  
 My hand, and list ye what I say,  
 'BLAERDE . SHEHAY . ALPHEINO,  
 KASBUE . CORSONS . ALBUFRIO.'  
 These words, of import dark and deep,

Shall save ye, waking or asleep,  
 Go then, sleep well the night away,  
 At dawn we'll rouse thee for the fray."  
 "Dear Aunt," the Fox cried, "Can I ever,  
 For this advice, so wise and clever,  
 Thank you enough? now feel I sure  
 Through this dread combat to endure;  
 All doubts and terrors seem to cease  
 Since my ear heard those words of peace."  
 Then lay he down upon the sward,  
 And slumbered sound as any lord  
 Sleeps in his castle, till the sun  
 Drave o'er the hills night's veiling dun,  
 When came the faithful Otter, crying,  
 "Reynard, ye've had enough of lying."  
 Replied the Fox, "Well, I must say  
 I've done some lying in my day."  
 "See here," the Otter cried, "what luck!  
 For you I've filched this fine fat duck;  
 Three times in water went I dipping  
 Ere I could catch the fowler tripping,  
 But once he looked another way,  
 And, pop! within my bag it lay."  
 Quoth Reynard, "I were fool indeed  
 If I refused on duck to feed,  
 It is a handsel fair and good,  
 I thank thee dearly for such food;  
 And when once more I'm in good cue,  
 Dear friend, I'll do as much for you."  
 The duck forthwith he ate up plain,

XXXVIII.  
 Dame  
 Rukenawe's  
 shield.

XXXVIII. All adjuncts savoury counting vain;  
 Dame And feeling, then, his powers restored,  
 Rukenawe's He set his visage battleward,  
 shield. And as his steps he thither bent,  
 Hundreds that loved him with him went.



XXXIX.  
 The Fox  
 well dight.

**W**HEN the King saw the Fox all shorn,  
 More naked far than he was born,  
 And marked, too, all his body oiled,

Looking somewhat as he'd been boiled,  
 He cried, "Good Lord! What sight is this?  
 Ne'er yet in all my life ywis  
 Saw I such strange unseemly creature,  
 Reynard, ye've changed your every feature."  
 And forthright laughed he long and loud,  
 And with him joined the motley crowd.  
 Thereto said Reynard not one word,  
 Nor seemed he with the laughter stirred,  
 But gravely bent his knee before  
 The King and Queen, and then once more  
 Addressed himself unto the field,  
 And did around obeisance yield.  
 There stood the Wolf, by friends surrounded,  
 While from his lips big words out bounded,  
 Boasting that with destruction great

He would the Fox annihilate.  
The Losse and Leopard duly kept  
The battle-lists, and thence they swept  
All but the combatants, then took  
From out its case the holy book,  
On which the Wolf was quick to swear  
The Fox was false past all compare;  
That would he on his body prove  
Ere from the field he deigned to move.  
Then sware the Fox that he in brief  
Would prove the Wolf a losel thief,  
And would on his false body show  
How ill fate doth from ill deeds grow.  
Then, just before the fight began,  
Dame Rukenawe to her nephew ran,  
And said, "Dear Reynard, have ye heed  
To my good words would ye well speed.  
Ere yet that ye were seven months old,  
I by your mother have been told,  
So wise ye were, that ye by night  
Needed nor moon nor lantern-light  
Where any good ye wist to win,  
And for your wondrous skill therein  
Ye gat of all men such great fame,  
That to all future time your name  
Shall for deep subtlety be known,  
E'en from the cottage to the throne.  
So now be wary, quick, and wise,  
That ye may this day win the prize,  
And then with all your friends shall be

XXXIX.  
The Fox  
well dight.

XXXIX.  
The Fox  
well dight.

Fulfilled of praise and jollity."  
"Dear Aunt," quoth Reynard, "ye may truly  
Trust me to work so well and duly,  
That good my friends reap in profusion,  
While on my foes falls dire confusion."  
"Farewell, dear Nephew," cried his Aunt,  
"Great Heaven to you all blessings grant."



XL HOW THE WOLF &  
THE FOX FOUGHT TO-  
GETHER † · † · † ·

XL. Fought  
is the field.

**T**HEN rushed the Wolf with angry gride  
Towards the Fox, and opened wide  
His forefeet, thinking so to take  
His foe, and him therein to shake,  
Till that his very soul gave forth,  
Making his life of no more worth  
Than is that of a mouse or rat  
Seized by an angry dog or cat.  
But deftly dodged the Fox from him,  
Of lighter foot than Isegrym,  
Though with great stride the Wolf once more  
Rushed on and pressed his foe right sore,  
And many a time he nigh o'ertook him,  
And with his heavy paw had strook him,  
But that the Fox with quick avail  
Dashed in his eyes his ciselled tail.  
Hereat the Wolf must backward start,

So maddening is the pain and smart,  
And while he stays to clear his eyes  
Reynard provides a new surprise ;  
For to the windward ran he fast,  
And there the sand in clouds upcast,  
Which straightway in the Wolf's eyes flew,  
Who, whence it came, nor saw nor knew,  
But stood nigh blind and sore confounded,  
When swiftly on him Reynard bounded,  
And on his head gave three such bites  
As caused him, so the tale recites,  
To swear in blind and frantic rage  
With words that shall not stain my page.  
Whereat cried Reynard in delight,  
" How now, Sir Wolf? ye love to bite ;  
Is that unto your liking, pray ?  
'Tis but a foretaste of the fray.  
How many a tender, gentle thing  
Hast thou killed with thy ravening !  
So hast thou rashly me appealed  
To this, where now thy fate is sealed.  
At last fair truth and justice wins,  
And I am chosen, for thy sins,  
To send thee down to nether hell,  
A trust that glads my heart right well.  
So may I now assoyle thy soul,  
And to thee penance give and dole.  
Now am I master of thy life,  
For thou art worsted in the strife ;  
Kneel then, and beg with bated breath,

XL. Fought  
is the field.

XL. Fought That I deign spare thee from the death,  
is the field. For though I hate thy race and clan,  
Small lust have I to kill a man."  
The Wolf with rage was well nigh mad  
To hear the Fox such insults add  
To all the injuries he gave him,  
And thus in scornful speech outbrave him  
With gibe, and jeer, and sharp sarcasm,  
Which sent throughout his frame such spasm  
That he no sort of word could utter,  
But only with wild anger stutter.  
Thought he, "The time is come when I  
Must conquer, or must basely die,"  
So, twisting up one foot, he smote  
The Fox so deftly on the throat  
That down he dropped as drops a stone  
That has its upward force outgrown,  
Imparted by a throwster's hand,  
And once again it seeks the land;  
Yet in a moment up he darted  
In nowise beaten or faint-hearted,  
But with clear voice once more raised high  
Defiant shout and battle cry.  
Then once again with angry rush,  
The Wolf thinks in his arms to crush  
His slippery foe, but quickly feels  
He might as well try holding eels  
Betwixt his finger and his thumb,  
Or fixing flies that o'er him hum,  
For his smooth body, oiled, doth slip

Time upon time from out his grip.  
So subtle was the Fox and snell,  
It ever and again befel  
'Twixt the Wolf's legs he rushed, and then  
Dashed his well-eiselled tail again  
In his foe's eyes, till Isegrym  
Felt wellnigh was an end of him ;  
Yet trusting in his greater strength,  
Still hoped he might prevail at length,  
For many a stroke the Fox he wrought,  
Which had been with his death-blow fraught  
Had they full reached, but ever he  
Avoided them most skilfully.  
A glorious combat 'twas to scan,  
Fought manfully 'twixt man and man ;  
Sure such a battle to behold  
Were worth a pile of ruddy gold.  
Still on, with many a cuff and bite,  
With varying luck they wildly fight,  
Till that the Wolf, grown mad with rage,  
Strove at close quarters to engage  
Once more his foe, and cried, " The day  
I'll hap at venture come what may."  
So rushed he blindly at the Fox,  
And dealt him one, two, three such knocks,  
That down he went like dump of lead  
All in a heap, as he were dead.  
Screamed forth the Wolf, " Base Fox, at last  
Round thee my iron arms I'll cast,  
And hold thee tight as blacksmith's vice,

XL. Fought  
is the field.

XL. Fought Or as earth bound with winter's ice."  
 is the field. As Reynard the fierce Wolf lay under,  
 It leaves but little room for wonder  
 That he was wellnigh in despair  
 How he therefrom alive should fare,  
 While the Wolf's friends were blithe and spry,  
 Deeming the Fox's game gone by;  
 With shouts of joy the air they rend,  
 Doubting no longer of the end.  
 Isegrym's feet were still so tender,  
 That they could him small service render;  
 But as he held his foe beneath,  
 He made snatch at him with his teeth,  
 Which the Fox seeing, he his claws  
 Thrust just above the Wolf's great jaws,  
 And tare the skin down o'er his eyes,  
 Whereof one hung out, and his cries  
 So loud, so deep, so piteous were,  
 As racked the hardest heart to hear.



XLI. HOW THE FOX BE-  
 ING UNDER THE WOLF  
 SO GLOZED HIM THAT  
 HE CAME ABOVE AGAIN.

XLI. The  
 Fox nigh  
 lost.

THE Wolf a moment stayed to wipe  
 His eyes, when swift from out his gripe  
 Started the Fox, but nothing heeding  
 How sorely his torn head was bleeding,  
 The Wolf caught at him once again,

And held him fast with might and main ;  
 Then in a most unloving hug  
 They wrestle, struggle, strive and tug,  
 Till flat upon the ground they go,  
 The Wolf above, the Fox below.  
 Cried the Wolf now, " Choose, traitor, choose,  
 If thou forthwith thy life wilt lose,  
 Or yielding thee, wilt mercy crave,  
 And own thee for my bounden slave."  
 When Reynard heard the angry voice  
 That left him this unwelcome choice,  
 Thought he, "'Tis time to speak him fair,  
 If I my life would have him spare."  
 So quoth he, " Isegrym, dear friend,  
 'Twere well this strife drew now to end ;  
 Most gladly will I be your man,  
 To help and serve you all I can,  
 And let us to the holy grave  
 Together wend our souls to save,  
 Trusting thereby to pardon winning  
 For all we've ever done of sinning,  
 From the grace-giving shrines that stand  
 Within the blessed Holy Land.  
 Ne'er had a King so great an offer  
 As that which now to you I proffer,  
 But with good will I'd serve you rather  
 Than e'en the Pope our Holy Father,  
 And all my lineage too shall be  
 Bound to do honour unto thee.  
 Having such lordship, then, I trow

XLJ. The  
 Fox nigh  
 lost.

XLI. The  
Fox nigh  
lost.

All other lords to thee shall bow ;  
What King could then with thee compare,  
Or anything against thee dare ?  
And thou shalt choose the choicest dish  
Whene'er I take or flesh or fish ;  
Of poultry, plover, game, or geese,  
Your larder shall have rich increase ;  
Before I touch one bit of meat  
All shall be laid at your dread feet ;  
Ever I'll be within thy call  
To help thee whatsoe'er befall ;  
Such union both would profit highly,  
For thou art strong, as I am wily.  
'Twixt men who are so near of kin,  
Ne'er should dissension enter in ;  
My soul is now with grief full fraught,  
That I 'gainst you this day have fought ;  
But ye against me first appealed,  
Having your heart towards me steeled,  
Or I would have forborne most gladly,  
For to wound thee doth grieve me sadly ;  
And knowing thee so good and virtuous,  
My conduct herein hath been courteous,  
For I have spared thee many a danger,  
As I had ne'er done to a stranger,  
For ever a nephew, as I trow,  
Respect should to his uncle show.  
And when I might have vantage ta'en,  
Proving myself thy deadly bane,  
My heart refused to do the deed,

Sore though my peril and my need ;  
And though we've now fought many a round,  
I've harmed thee with no serious wound,  
Except that most ill-timed incision  
Which caused a mishap to your vision,  
At which I ever shall repine,  
Wishing the injury were mine ;  
And henceforth, to my loving heart,  
Your lost eye will give dole and smart.  
But still the loss, as ye must know,  
Is not unmitigated woe,  
For most men close two windows, but  
Ye need but trouble one to shut.  
My wife and lineage, as is meet,  
Shall fall before your gracious feet,  
And humbly pray that ye will give  
To your poor nephew leave to live.  
And also I will freely own  
What evil ways towards thee I've shown,  
And what sad lies 'gainst thee I've told,  
Wherefore deep grief my heart doth hold.  
All this that now I say to thee,  
No other man should draw from me,  
So may ye rest in happy plight,  
Fulfilled of honour, praise and might.  
If to all this that now I pray  
Ye should prove deaf, and say me nay,  
And in thine heart should'st find to kill  
One who hath done thee little ill,  
Think of my friends what foes ye make,

XLI. The  
Fox nigh  
lost.

XLI. The  
Fox nigh  
lost.

Who would hate thee for my dear sake.  
That man is wise who well can measure  
The after-claps of wrath at leisure,  
And he who in his anger hastes,  
Oft-times hath bitter after-tastes.  
But ye, dear Uncle, be too wise  
To doubt which way your profit lies.  
My life, I own, but matters little,  
I care for it no jot or tittle ;  
But what a shame in future days  
Would hang around a man who slays  
A penitent antagonist,  
Who would his very feet have kissed.”  
“Ay, thief!” the Wolf cried, “thou a truce  
Would’st gladly gain, for now a noose  
Thou feel’st around thy neck, but I  
Know far too well thy villainy.  
No more I count the tale ye tell,  
Than of an egg the broken shell.  
I would not loose of thee my hold,  
Though thou should’st give me fine red gold  
High piled as yon grey mountains old ;  
And for thy rascal kith and kin,  
I count their worth not one brass pin.  
I know thy lies too well by half,  
And am no bird to take with chaff ;  
Long days ere ever thou wert born,  
I knew to choose ’twixt husks and corn,  
Howe’er ye flatter, coax, and floyt,  
I set thereby not half a doit.

Speak thus to one who knows thee not,  
Thy measure I right well have got;  
Too oft I've tasted of thy fare,  
Once more to fall into thy snare.  
Thou false and perjured noisome knave,  
Thou'dst have me think ye did behave  
With mildness towards me in this battle;  
Away with such base, senseless prattle.  
To close for ever my right eye,  
Was that your pleasant courtesy?  
Small thank have thou I am not dead,  
With twenty wounds upon my head;  
Had I but rested once for breath,  
So surely had I met my death.  
I were, indeed, a sorry dolt,  
If from my hands I let thee bolt;  
For 'tis no fancy or delusion  
That thou hast shame wrought and confusion  
To me and to my dearest wife,  
Whom I love far beyond my life;  
Her fair name hast thou so bespattered  
With slanders, that her nerves are shattered  
In such wise, that she never more  
Can know the peace she knew of yore;  
And when this riseth to my mind,  
No limit can my hatred find  
'Gainst thee, and all the villain crew  
That still hold fast and stick by you."  
Now all the time the Wolf was speaking,  
Reynard some plan or scheme was seeking,

XLI. The  
Fox nigh  
lost.

XLII. The  
Fox nigh  
lost.

By which, e'en now, the while he spoke  
He suddenly might cast his yoke.  
As he thus ended, the Wolf's tongue,  
With drouht and weariness down hung  
Outside his chaps, that Reynard saw,  
And said, "Sore need doth know no law,"  
So jerked his head from underneath,  
Seizing the Wolf's tongue with his teeth,  
And thereto hung he like grim death.  
Howled out the Wolf with mortal woe,  
And from his claws let Reynard go,  
Then falling agonized and anguished,  
In a dead swoon he lay and languished.



XLII · HOW · ISEGRYM ·  
· WAS · OVERCOME · BY · THE ·  
· FOX · AND · HOW · THE · FOX ·  
· HAD · THE · WORSHIP ·

XLII. Rey-  
nard vic-  
torious.

**T**HEN Reynard sprang upon his feet  
Crying aloud, "Revenge is sweet,  
No more with me the Wolf shall vie,  
Supreme o'er all the Wolves am I."  
So jumped he upon Isegrym;  
And bit, and stack, and smote at him,  
Then by his legs his body haled  
Right through the field, and never failed  
With strident voice, in accents high,  
Pæans of victory to cry.  
Straight, the Wolf's friends, o'ercome with grief,  
Went weeping to their Lord and chief,

Praying he would proclaim a peace  
Causing the cruel strife to cease.  
Then cried aloud the King, "Methinks  
You, Leopard, and you, Lossem Lynx,  
Must part the combatants, for we  
No deathstroke 'fore our eyes would see.  
Well hath the field been foughten out,  
None can of Reynard's victory doubt."

XLII. Reynard  
victorious.

**A**LL further fighting straight was stayed,  
And worship to the Fox was paid,  
"No one," the heralds cried, "denies  
The Fox hath fairly won the prize."  
Spoke forth the Fox, "My worthy thanks  
Give I to people of all ranks,  
And whatso'er the King commands,  
Thereto I'll bind my willing hands,  
No better thing the world could yield  
To me, than that I gained the field.  
Now let my friends all gather round,  
And give me their advice; profound  
Are they in wisdom's lore, and they  
Shall guide me in my future way.  
Then came Dame Sleepcap, and with her  
Grymbert the Dachs, her life's partner,  
Dame Rukenawe, and her sisters twain,  
And also following in her train,  
Bitelives and Fulrompe, her dear sons,  
And following those two hopeful ones,  
Hatenet her daughter, and some more  
Mounting well up beyond a score.

XLII. Reynard  
victorious.

**T**IS grand to see when men succeed,  
What friendships they around them breed,  
And when by some mischance they fail,  
How readily old friends turn tail.  
Forthwith throughout the realm of beasts  
Were glorious joyances and feasts;  
Trumpets they blew and shawms they piped,  
And from all memory they wiped  
Record of Reynard's grave offences,  
Whether in past or present tenses,  
And all his far and near relations  
Presented their congratulations.  
Reynard the Fox gave thanks to all,  
Or rich or poor, or great or small,  
Who would with acclamation bring  
The victor knight before the King.  
So in procession grand went he  
With trumpets, drums, and minstrelsy,  
And as they went, the motley crowd  
Shewed forth their joy with voicing loud,  
Breaking out as they strode along  
Into a high triumphant song :

All hail to Reynard ! with one voice  
His masterdom proclaim ;  
His name and fame are all aglow,  
While on the field the Wolf lies low,  
Foredone with grief and shame.  
Raise then the song of triumph high  
To Reynard is the victory.

The Bear, the Cat, the Wolf, all strove  
To give the Fox a fall,  
But he with crafty wile unmatched,  
Each one hath in his turn dispatched,  
Triumphant over all.  
Then let loud pæans rend the air,  
For we great Reynard's glory share.

XLII. Reynard victorious.

Sing merrily forth the Fox's praise,  
His name we chaunt and bless,  
What though he wins by fraud and guile  
We loudly laud each crafty wile.  
Our watchword is success!  
Outtringing peals to heaven we fling  
For Reynard and our noble King.

When the Fox to his Lord bent down,  
The King cried out, "Now by my crown,  
Reynard thou gallantly hast fought,  
And all thine honours fairly bought.  
In combat hast thou made good play,  
And worshipfully kept the day.  
Roam freely now whereso ye will,  
And let the whole case stand until  
The Wolf once more is whole, and then  
We'll talk it o'er with wisest men,  
And thus I trust, 'twixt friend and friend,  
We'll bring this matter to good end."



XLIIJ. AN ENSAMPLE  
THAT THE FOX TOLD  
TO THE KING AFTER HE  
HAD WON THE BATTLE.

XLIII. Gain  
at sore cost.

**M**Y Lord," the Fox said, "thereto I  
Agree with thanks, right readily.  
But think, when I to Court first came,

How many men scoffed at my name,  
To whom I'd done ne hurt, ne scathe,  
And yet they took occasion rathe,  
To howl me down, and join in cry  
With my most bitter enemy.  
These men would fain have me destroyed,  
Because they saw the Wolf was buoyed  
With hope, near you to hold high place,  
Leaving the poor Fox in disgrace;  
My Lord, the wise man notes the end  
And therefrom reckons he his friend.  
With your good grace I will relate  
A sight I witnessed but of late.

**S**O happed it, as I went my rounds,  
I noted a great heap of hounds,  
Waiting with hungry eyes to greet  
The dealing of their daily meat;  
When issued from the kitchen quick,  
A hound between whose jaws did stick  
A goodly well-sized rib of beef,

And following sharply on the thief  
 Runs forth the cook, who on his hips,  
 From out a bowl, in haste unships  
 A douse of water, scalding hot,  
 Which from his back took every jot  
 Of skin, and left him raw and bare,  
 Yet held he what he'd stolen there.  
 The other hounds who saw the prey,  
 Much envied him, and wished that they  
 Were in such favour with the cook,  
 Crying with lean and hungry look,  
 'Surely thou art in happy case,  
 Would well that we were in thy place ;  
 Thou from the cook hast got a bone,  
 With plenty of good meat thereon,  
 While we stand by all starved and bare,  
 Patiently waiting for our share.'  
 Quoth he, 'Ye nothing know thereof,  
 Or ye would find you're much best off.  
 Ye see me with the bone before,  
 But know not how behind I'm sore.  
 Then turned he towards them his scald hips  
 Whereof the skin hung down in strips ;  
 They, seeing that, soon changed their song,  
 And not a hound the pack among,  
 But fled and left him desolate,  
 To sigh, and moan, and wail his fate.  
 Great King, thus oft it is with men,  
 Who would be made great lords, and then,  
 When they some post of honour fill,

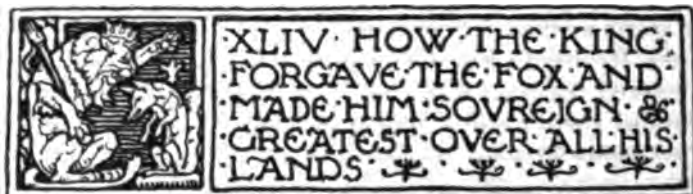
XLIII. Gain  
 at sore cost.

**XLIII. Gain** The poor eftsoons they spoil and pill,  
**at sore cost.** And rob them like for-hungred hounds,  
Setting unto their lust no bounds.  
These in their mouth do bear the bone,  
And nought have they but laud alone.  
For whatso crime they choose commit,  
No man alive dare gainsay it  
For fear to fall beneath their scorn,  
And like to helpless sheep be shorn ;  
And some uphold them so that they  
May lot have in their evil way,  
If perchance some small trifle lingers,  
Where they may dip and lick their fingers,  
And in their evil life and works,  
They strengthen them like heathen Turks :  
But little do they see behind,  
What grief and anguish they shall find ;  
Yet fall at last from high to low,  
And in deep shame and anguish go,  
When their vile practice is made known,  
And clearly 'fore the whole world shown.  
So gain they every true man's curse,  
And quickly fall from bad to worse.  
Then no man cares to speak them fair,  
But like the hound they lose their hair,  
That is, their friends, who in old times  
Helped them to mask and cloke their crimes,  
But now all bare and naked they  
Must show them in the open day,  
Branded with infamy and shame,

Exposed to all men's sneer and blame;  
Askance they find their friends all look,  
Like the hound scalded by the cook.  
Dear Lord, heed ye this tale I tell,  
And it shall serve your worship well,  
For even now in these our days,  
Extortioners still wend their ways;  
Of poor men's goods have they worse drouth,  
Than the lean hound who in his mouth  
Bare the fat rib; in towns, in courts,  
Flourish these men, in divers sorts,  
Ever with facing and bracing they  
Ride o'er the poor, none saying nay,  
Freedom and privilege they sell,  
And of things, which they wot right well  
Poor souls no knowledge had or thought,  
Bear them on hand, until they're caught  
In their vile snares, not witting of it,  
Turning to these men's good and profit.  
Pray God that he damnation give  
To such folk if they die or live.  
My God I humbly thank and praise,  
That no man, of such devious ways,  
Can me indict, or if he do  
Both I and all my lineage too  
Can prove our actions true and right,  
And clear as is sweet morning light.  
Ever the Fox, the Fox shall be  
From now to all eternity,  
Though all his enemies had sworn

XLIII. Gain  
at sore cost.

XLIII. Gain To bring him into scathe and scorn.  
 at sore cost. Dear lord, than thee, within my heart  
 No other lord hath lot or part,  
 For no man would I turn from thee,  
 But ever to the utterest be  
 Thy bounden servitor and friend,  
 E'en to my poor life's furthest end.  
 Though otherwise it hath been said  
 By men ill taught or men ill bred,  
 Yet that for you I've done my best,  
 Must be to thee most manifest."



XLIV. Reynard's state glorious.

WHILE to this rigmarole he listened,  
 A tear-drop in the King's eye glistened.  
 Quoth he, "To be so much affected,

Is really more than I expected.  
 Dear Reynard, now I feel most deeply,  
 That I have held you all too cheaply,  
 My debt to you is really great,  
 And hereby you I nominate,  
 Our first and chiefest magistrate,  
 To whom all power shall be committed,  
 As one who is most duly fitted,  
 To govern all things in such order  
 That justice reign within our border.

For if thy wit be well applied  
To good and virtue, none beside  
Can at the council board be wiser,  
Or of more worth as our adviser ;  
Nor can I man more fitting deem,  
For privy councillor supreme.  
And if so be some man misdo you,  
Sending the sword of sorrow through you,  
Revenge on him, swift, sharp, and sure  
Shall to thy wrong work speedy cure.  
No other in the land shall be  
So great as thou art, after me.”  
Then Reynard’s kin with varied voicing  
Thanked the good King ’mid loud rejoicing.  
Replied their Lord, “ I pray that you  
Remember him that he stand true.”  
Whereat Dame Rukenawe exclaimed,  
“ It grieves me to hear falseness named,  
For were not Reynard true and leal,  
Disgrace would o’er his lineage steal,  
And they at once would show their hate  
Of any conduct reprobate,  
While I should break off all connection  
Had he from virtue shown deflection.”  
Reynard, his hand upon his heart,  
Cried, “ I’m well conscious for my part  
That I’m scarce worthy of such favour,  
But of such good my life shall savour,  
That all shall say the King had reason  
Thus to acquit me of foul treason.”

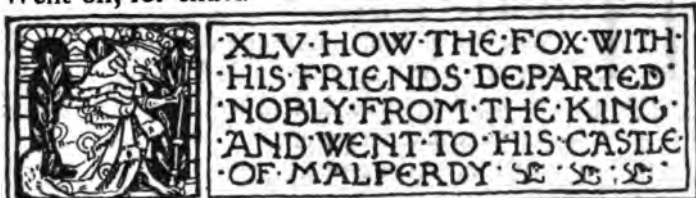
XLIV. Reynard’s state  
glorious.

XLIV. Rey- Then bidding to the King adieu,  
nard's state Off went they all in merry cue.  
glorious.

**H**EARKEN ye now how Isegrym,  
Abashed of heart, and sore of limb,  
Lay stretched upon the bloody field,  
As though the fight his fate had sealed,  
Till Bruin, Tybert, and Ersewyn,  
With others of their tribe and kin,  
Carried him from the ground and lay  
His body on sweet, soft, dry hay,  
Covered him warm, and tender care  
Bestowed without or stint or spare.  
His wounds were washed, and healing plaisters  
Laid on by surgeons and wise masters.  
Most sick and feeble was he left,  
And seemed of feeling all bereft.  
But when they rubbed and wryved his eye,  
He sprang from out his swoon with cry  
That caused all those around who stood,  
To think he surely had gone wood,  
Till that the masters gave him drink  
That made his eyes to droop and wink,  
(Or I should say his eye—the left,  
For of the right he was bereft.)  
And o'er his senses caused to creep  
A soothing and health-giving sleep.  
Then soon he gained new strength and life,  
Gladding the hearts of friends and wife,  
And all his strife and troubles ended,

Once more towards his home he wended.  
 So to his dwelling every beast  
 Went off, for ended was the feast.

XLIV. Reynard's state  
 glorious.



**T**HEN Reynard from the King and Queen  
 Parted with joyous heart I ween,  
 For ne'er had one of all his race,  
 Ere this, been in such thriving case.

XLV. He  
 lives in scorn  
 of folk cen-  
 sorious.

"Farewell, dear Reynard," quoth the King,  
 "Come soon again, and with you bring  
 Your charming wife Dame Ermelyne."  
 Quoth he, "Most gracious Lord, I lean  
 Ever to your august command  
 At all times ready to your hand,  
 But may kind heaven give ye such speed  
 That of the Fox ye have small need."  
 So having thus played out the play,  
 With jocund heart he took his way  
 Toward Malperdy that self-same day.  
 Laughed he, "Ha! ha! I now have twirled  
 Around my finger all the world,  
 And owe my present elevation  
 To lying and dissimulation!"

XLV. He  
lives in scorn  
of folk cen-  
sorious.

WHOSO in Reynard's craft will set him,  
Much honour, doubtless, will aye get him,  
For lies and flattery well befall

Spiritual lords and temporal.  
Of those who weave his warp and weft,  
Full many in the world are left,  
And still his ways and manners run,  
Through every land beneath the sun,  
While those who work not Reynard's craft,  
Oft-times are counted but for dast,  
And have small honour in the state ;  
For Reynard's ways, and Reynard's prate,  
Are ever held in good esteem  
By those whom men the foremost deem,  
And he who's learned in Reynard's school,  
Although he be a sorry fool,  
Yet oft-times to the top will rise,  
By throwing dust in good men's eyes.  
Throughout the world the Fox's seed  
Is thickly sown and rank doth breed,  
While righteous people be but lost,  
Or else aside as worthless tost,  
When envy, hate, and falsehood thrive,  
And good men into corners drive.  
In courts of Emperors and Kings,  
Whoso with free hand money flings,  
He is it hath the upper hand,  
For what can 'gainst vile lucre stand ?  
Great risk there is that judgment sore  
Will fall from God on us therefore,

So should we humbly pray him send  
His grace that we our ways may mend  
And by his mercy find good end.

XLV. He  
lives in scorn  
of folk cen-  
sorious.

**T**HE Fox, surrounded by his kin,  
Malperdy's stronghold straight doth win,  
Where come, he bids adieu to each,  
With fairest words of courteous speech,  
And duly begs that whenso they  
Should e'er be faring by that way,  
They'll not forget that right well he  
Loves jovial hospitality.  
Thanked he them all for their assistance,  
Which helped him make such good resistance  
Against his enemies' foul snares,  
Seeking to throw him unawares.  
His wife, his pains and troubles ended,  
Now welcomed him with arms extended :  
Quoth he, " Dear Ermelyne, at last,  
I think my adverse days are past,  
The King I've hoodwinked with inventions,  
About my excellent intentions,  
And the Queen following in his wake,  
Doth wildest lies for gospel take.  
'Tis wondrous how a fertile brain  
May make wrong things look straight and plain.  
The blundering Wolf I quite upset,  
And tangled him in such a net,  
That now, no matter what be said,  
Against me, he'll no more make head."

XLV. He So in security lives he  
lives in scorn Within the walls of Malperdy  
of folk cen- With his dear wife and children three  
sorious. Teaching to them the A. B. C.  
Of lying, theft, and perjury.  
And when the King gets in a pother,  
About some knotty point or other,  
He never hesitates to send  
For Reynard, as his dearest friend,  
And all men sets he in the stocks  
Who dare speak ill of REYNARD FOX.

#### EPILOGUE.

N OW who should say or less or more,  
Than what is written heretofore  
About the Fox, and how he wended,  
Or think the story might be mended,  
Much pity feel I for his wit,  
Having but small esteem of it.  
But he who hath well understood,  
And found the tale fair, wise, and good,  
Such man I hold for man of sense,  
And worthy of all deference.  
And though examples here are wrought  
Which to the deed have ne'er been brought,  
Yet serve they well man's life to guide,  
That he ill ways may cast aside,  
And tread fair wisdom's paths of peace:  
Till gaining from this world release,  
His soul fulfilled of joy and love,  
At last shall win sweet heaven above.

## ·SUMMA·

**I**F ANY MAN HEREIN SHOULD READ  
WORDS THAT KEEN PRICKS OF CONSCIENCE BRAD,  
LET HIM FORTHWITH HIS ILL WAYS QUIT  
AND TURN HIS HEART TO BETTER WIT.  
AND WHOSO FEELS DISPOSED TO FROWN  
AT AUGHT HE FINDETH HERE SET DOWN,  
LET HIM FOR WHAT HIS SPIRIT SHOCKS,  
BLAME NOT THE AUTHOR BUT

THE FOX·





**GLOSSARIAL NOTES ON SOME PERSONS, PLACES, AND  
THINGS MENTIONED IN THE FOREGOING HISTORY,  
AND ON SOME WORDS USED BY REYNARD AND HIS  
FRIENDS WHICH HAVE FALLEN OUT OF OUR-DAY  
SPEECH.**

**ABRION, n.,**      The works of "Master Abrion "  
p. 246, l. 16.   None of late days have looked upon.  
                     "Twould seem that wondrous paradox,  
                     The fertile brain of Reynard Fox,  
                     Bred him, that he in ages later  
                     Might vex the studious commentator.

**ACON, n.,**      Acon for Aachen standa, and well  
p. 129, l. 16.   We know it as Aix-la-chapelle.

**AKERYN, n.,**      The learned "Master Akeryn "  
p. 244, l. 29.   To us is but a shadow thin.  
                     If e'er he wrote, his works are tost  
                     Into the limbo of books lost.  
                     Perhaps he, too, is a creation  
                     Of Reynard's brain, for our vexation.

**AVICENE, n.,**      Than the great Arab Avicene,  
p. 237, l. 5.      None wiser e'er was born, I ween.  
                     In the tenth century lived he,  
                     And wrote "Canon Medicinæ."  
                     (The quantity is wrong, I know,  
                     But right 'twill not in rhythm go.)

- BEWIMPLE, *v.*** A head-gear formed with many a crimple,  
p. 205, l. 8. In Reynard's days was called a wimple,  
So "to bewimple" meant to say,  
To hide and cover from the day.
- BONSING, *n.*** This word as "Boussyng" may you see  
p. 240, l. 14. In the great Oxford N. E. D.  
Caxton's turned "n" misplaced it there.  
Polecats in Dutch do this name bear.
- BROKE, *n.*** In Caxton only find we "broke,"  
p. 138, l. 1. Meaning a sly, malicious joke.
- BURGEONING, *v.*** To burgeon, most men wot, I trow,  
pp. 3, l. 4. Is but to bud, burst forth, and grow.
- BYDWONGEN, *n.*** This word dragged straightway from the Dutch,  
p. 157, l. 3. You'll say cannot be needed much,  
For centuries have left it lonely,  
'Tis found in Caxton's writings only.  
It means enforced, constrained, compelled,  
By force kept backwards or withheld.
- DACHS, *n.*** A badger, Caxton calls a Dachs,  
*passim.* Ta'en from the Dutch; it strangely lacks  
In modern word-books, yet the sound  
Is quite familiar of "Dachs-hound."
- DEUCE-ACE, *c. n.*** That which is likened to deuce-ace  
p. 149, l. 20. Hath in esteem the lowest place;  
For when a dicer makes his cast,  
Deuce-ace is reckoned least and last.
- DIPPEA, *n.*** A dippea is a worm accurst,  
p. 195, l. 6. From whose bite follows raging thirst.
- EISIL, *n.*** For this, one needs not to seek far,  
p. 303, l. 26. All the world knows 'tis vinegar.
- EME, *n.*** Eme means some relative or other,  
p. 61, l. 25. An uncle, cousin, or e'en brother.

- FLOCKS,           The phrase to "stufte the sleve with flocks,"  
p. 177, l. 21.   Which the King charges on the Fox,  
At first reads like some ancient joke  
Which he would at false Reynard poka,  
And hence the words owe their insertion,  
Nigh wholemeal dragged from Caxton's version ;  
Now fear I 'tis a mistranslation,  
At least, that's Logeman's explanation.
- FLOYT, *v.*,       If illustration you require  
p. 316, l. 29.   Of this word, turn to Chaucer's Squire.  
To floyt doth clearly mean to flatter,  
Or to speak softly for that matter.
- GELYS, *n.*,       Who "Master Gelys" was lies dark,  
p. 146, l. 2.    Yet trow I that some learned clerk  
It represents, who in his day  
Held o'er men's minds no little sway.
- GRE, *n.*,         This word, which means goodwill or grace,  
p. 230, l. 3.    In our-day speech hath rarely place.
- GRYN, *n.*,        A gryn is now called "gin," mayhap,  
p. 53, l. 15.    Because than gin there's no worse trap.
- GRYSE, *n.*,       Gryse in old speech did grey fur mean,  
p. 205, l. 15.   On robes of office oft-times seen.
- HALTSTER, *n.*,    But for hard need, I had preferred  
p. 147, l. 20.   Not to have dared to coin a word ;  
But as malt-makers are called maltsters,  
Surely halt-makers must be haltsters.
- JAPE, *v.*,        To jape, was but to gibe or joke,  
p. 153, l. 15.   Or at one's neighbour fun to poke.
- LEASING, *n.*,     He who our new-turned Bible tries  
p. 195, l. 12.   For this good word, will now find "lies,"  
Psalm v., verse 6, or else falsehood,  
Psalm iv., verse 2, where "leasing" stood.

- MUSCHONT, *n.*** Muschont for Weasel still survives  
p. 240, l. 11. In the east country, where their lives  
Lived out the Dutchmen, driven o'er sea  
By Alva's dread ferocity.
- OSTROLE, *n.*** This cryptogamic beast all search  
p. 240, l. 18. Eludes, and leaves us in the lurch.  
To naturalists he is unknown,  
And etymologists him disown,  
Muller hath tracked him all he can,  
Yet baffles he him and Logeman.
- PALSTER, *n.*** A palster carried in his hand  
p. 147, l. 19. Each pilgrim to the holy land.  
'Tis a Dutch word, that's why, I weet,  
'Tis not in Bradley nor in Skeat.  
It was a staff five feet in length,  
And of good sturdiness and strength.
- RATHE, *adj.*** That rathe means early, each man knows  
p. 144, l. 22. Who's read of Milton's "rathe primrose."
- REDE, *v.*** Rede, doth advice or counsel mean,  
p. 162, l. 6. Oft scouted when 'tis good I ween.
- ROOM, *v.*** "To room," doth in our modern prate  
p. 193, l. 4. Give place to a worse word, "vacate."
- SIB, *n.*** A sib hath every man who lives,  
p. 88, l. 5. Unless he lack all relatives.
- SLONK, *v.*** This good word hath been treated badly,  
p. 174, l. 26. Left in the cold by Skeat and Bradley.  
To find the reason beats one hollow,  
'Tis a good Caxton word for swallow.
- SNELL, *a.*** It scarcely needs to say that snell  
p. 311, l. 2. Means quick, for that the sense doth tell.
- STEAD, *n.*** A farm in old speech was a stead,  
p. 263, l. 16. And to the stead-man's name oft wed.

- STOUNDMELE,      This looks at first a strange word verily,  
*adv.*, p. 123,      It means no more than momentarily.  
 l. 27.
- SWINK, *v.*,      Within this old word "swink" doth lurk  
 p. 130, l. 8.      The meaning of our phrase "hard work."
- WENTLE, *v.*,      To wentle was to roll or tumble,  
 p. 41, l. 28.      Or awkwardly along to stumble.
- WONDERLY, *adj.*, Grammar-men who in these days live,  
 p. 194, l. 15.      Count "wonderly" no adjective.  
                          Yet if such use I should be taxed on,  
                          I shield me behind Father Caxton.  
                          "Thaventure of the world," quoth he,  
                          (Cap. twenty-seven) "is wonderly."
- WOOD, *adj.*,      "To go wood," in the Fox days had  
 p. 328, l. 20.      The same force as our phrase, "go mad."
- YAMMER, *v.*,      To yammer was to mourn or cry,  
 p. 147, l. 26.      A good word that we've let go by.

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